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THE ADVENTURES OF THE YOUNG SOLDIER  
IN SEARCH OF THE BETTER WORLD





The Adventures  
of  
THE YOUNG SOLDIER  
in search of  
THE BETTER WORLD

by

C. E. M. JOAD

with drawings by  
MERVYN PEAKE

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*First published in July, Mcmaliii  
by Faber and Faber Limited  
24 Russell Square, London, W.C.1  
Printed in Great Britain by  
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# PREFACE

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I am indebted to so many people for the writing of this book, to contemporary statesmen for fragments of speeches, to contemporary novelists for ideas torn from their contexts, to politicians, planners, educationalists, civil servants and Marxists as well as to economists, historians and philosophers, that it would be as impossible to mention all, as it is invidious to single out some. I cannot, however, deny myself the special pleasure of thanking Mr. Lester Wilson<sup>1</sup> and Miss Nora Richmond and Miss Joan Evans for poems, Mr. Harold Izant for pruning, Miss Nora Nicholson for colloquialisms, Mr. Cyril Moore for a fantasy and my own past self for some attractive and unsound ideas.

I cannot, I am afraid, resist the temptation of adding a word of apology to readers for the frivolity of some parts of the work. It was conceived in a solemn, albeit a satirical vein, but when I came to the writing of it, cheerfulness would keep breaking in and the resultant atmosphere of intellectual high jinks, punctuated by arbitrary flurries of convulsive action was, I am afraid, from the first inappropriate to the high seriousness of the theme. Then came Mr. Peake's gorgeous pictures and made matters worse. How could one keep a wholly straight pen while writing a letter-press round some of his richer conceits? I see that what began as an apology is developing into a justification, so I will content myself with asking the reader not to allow the levity of the author, the irresponsibility of the characters and the exuberance of the illustrator to distract his attention from the gravity of the issues which they are jointly concerned to present.

C. E. M. JOAD

*Hampstead.*

November 1942.

<sup>1</sup> The verses and chorus of the Grand Inquisitor's Song on pp. 83-86 were provided by Mr. Wilson.



# *The Adventures of*

## THE YOUNG SOLDIER

### *in Search of the Better World*

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**I**n the Officers' Mess they had been listening to a wireless talk by Sir Stafford Cripps on What We Are Fighting For. 'We are fighting', he said, 'to make a better and a happier world'. That is very nice, the Young Soldier reflected, but he does not say how we are to make it. We have to beat the Nazis of course, but what do we do when we *have* beaten them?

The Young Soldier was a fine specimen of young English manhood, with a more enquiring turn of mind than is sometimes found among those who have emerged from the valley of the shadow of middle-class education; in fact his habit of enquiry had got him into trouble at school, where his reports, while uniformly praising his work, were apt to end with riders animadverting more in sorrow than in anger upon his habit of asking questions which were 'often childish and sometimes irritating'. The masters who taught at the Young Soldier's schools did not take kindly to questions which fell outside the scope of the curriculum which they were paid to teach, and regarded him with a certain amount of disapproval which was mitigated, however, by their recognition of his pleasant and respectful manner and of his prowess upon the playing field. When, however, he went, as in due course he did, to the University of Oxford, he found the atmosphere more favourable to an enquiring mind, for though his questions remained, for the most part, unanswered, he was no longer made to feel that the asking of them, and the discussing of the answers which the undergraduates attempted and the dons 'debunked', was bad form. There was, indeed, an elderly don by whom he once happened to sit at High

Table, who after the Young Soldier had fired a number of questions at him out of sheer nervousness, flattened him out for the rest of the dinner with the thunderous observation: 'Young man, it is needful that you should learn that conversation does not consist of a string of unmeaning interrogatories', but this discouragement was, he recognized, exceptional and proceeded rather from the idiosyncrasy of the don than from the atmosphere of the place.

In fact, when he began to study philosophy, he found that his enquiries as to why, if God was all powerful and all good, He made a world which contained so much evil, why, if evil was, as he was assured, due to man's misuse of God's gift of free will, He should have gone out of His way to bestow upon man a gift which He knew that man would so misuse, why He permitted the war, and why He created Hitler,—either, the Young Soldier felt, God could stop these things and would not, in which case He could not be very good, or He wanted to stop them but could not, in which case He could not be very powerful—obtained for him a bubble reputation as a budding philosopher.

His University career was cut short by the war and his enquiring turn of mind was not favourably regarded in the Army where officers are required to learn the Regulations and men to obey them; in spite of it, however, they made him into an officer. This they did because he was a tall, well-set-up young man, good-looking and pleasant spoken. He could swim, ride, dance and drink and he was an adept at pushing, hitting, and whacking balls with cues, sticks, clubs, bats, rackets and even mallets at the right moment, in the right place with the right amount of strength and in the right direction. In addition he was clean about his person and his buttons, always looked neat and tidy and shone pinkly in the face as if he had just stepped out of a hot bath. The men liked him. In short, nobody would have guessed that his pink and well-proportioned countenance with its finely chiselled nostrils and innocently open blue eyes surmounted by a crop of curly brown hair masked the enquiring mind that lurked serpent-like within.

Still pondering his question, the Young Soldier left the Officers' Mess for a walk in the forest in which his unit was stationed. It was the New Forest—though this, perhaps, ought not to have been revealed—at least, it began by being the New Forest though it

very quickly turned into no forest that ever was on land or sea. He had not gone more than a few yards from the hut, when he met an older officer called Captain Percy Nick, who turned and walked with him.

‘I have just been listening to Sir Stafford Cripps,’ said the Young



*Pearse*

Soldier, ‘who says that we are fighting for a better and a happier world. He means, I suppose, that we shall have a better and happier world when we have won the war, but he does not say how we are to get it. What do you think?’

Captain Nick started to laugh in a superior manner. ‘What a simpleton you are to believe that guff,’ he said. ‘Politicians always talk like that, partly because they think it is expected of them, and partly to make people fight for them. But, bless you, they don’t mean a word of it.’

‘Do you mean that we are not to have a better and a happier world after the war?’ asked the Young Soldier.



'Of course not. That's all my eye. It's just what they said after the last war, only then it was "a land fit for heroes to live in" in which everybody would have a "good job and a decent wage". But what happened?'

'What did happen?'

'Directly the war was over, everybody wanted to get demobbed as soon as he possibly could. In fact chaps were much too busy thinking about getting out of the Army to think about anything else. That was partly just natural fed-upness. They had had enough of the Army and being ordered about and they wanted to get back to "civvy street" and their wives. Also there was a most unholy scramble for jobs and fellows naturally didn't want to get left behind in the scrum. They wanted to be in on whatever was going.'

'Of course they did. But what has that got to do with the better world after the war?'

'This much; that people were much too busy with their personal affairs to think about the country and its affairs. In fact, they wanted to forget all about the government which had been drilling them and ordering them about and making them live in herds and, incidentally, feeding and clothing them for four years. They wanted to put public life and everything to do with public life out of their minds and to plunge with every available bit of energy that was left to them into private life, the more private, the better. They wanted to make love and to get drunk and to go to parties and to work in their gardens and tinker with motor bikes and all that sort of thing.

'That was the world of the 'twenties and the Bright Young Things, the booming world of lots of jobs and lots of women and lots of drink and high jinks and good wages for a couple of years or so, and then the cold fit, the first of the depressions, the strikes, the labour unrest. . . . And meanwhile the Government was getting away with the Treaty of Versailles and a return to the good old days of big business men happily enjoying the pleasures of unrestricted enterprise.'

'Was nothing done to make a better world?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Not much. They gave women the vote--fat lot of good that has

been—and extended daylight by an hour in the summer. But the Government was much too busy taking all the controls off industry to please the business men to have the chance to do much itself. In fact, it never really meant to do anything itself. I was in a Government department myself at the time and I remember we used to send out a letter—Stock Draft B 2 we called it, and it went out at least a dozen times a day—saying that the Government relied for the resumption of trade upon the initiative of private enterprise and that it did not, therefore, propose to retain the war-time controls of transport or shipping or food or production, which interfered with that initiative.

‘As for all the “reconstructions” that were to be carried out after the war, all the things that were to be pulled to pieces and put together again in better shape—they came to nothing. When the war ended, there was no reconstruction, no new order, and no rallying point for the forces that could have created a new order; instead there was a general *saute qui peut* of nations, parties, factions and individuals, led by the Government of “hard-faced business men” who had “done very well out of the war”, whom the country elected by an immense majority in the winter of 1918 to restore normality. All the business men wanted was to get back to the job of making profits good and hard, sweetened with a spot of vengeance on the Germans—hanging the Kaiser, “squeezing Germany” until “the pips squeaked” and all the rest of the nonsense.’

‘Well, that may be what happened last time, but next time we shall know better,’ said the Young Soldier.

‘Why should we? With nothing “constructed” during the present war, why should things be different from what they were last time when the war comes to an end? Who was it said only last week that “the foundations of a better world order must be laid while the war is actually in progress”? How well I can remember *that* being said before. In fact all the vocabulary of the last war is being resurrected. The same stock phrases, the same catch-words, the same pious platitudes, the same airy and grandiose projects—all words and only words. They are the expressions of fear, not the pronouncements of resolve.

*'When the devil was sick, you know,  
The devil a saint would be.  
When the devil was well,  
The devil a saint was he.'*

'I know about devils,' added Captain Nick, looking slyly at the Young Soldier, 'and I can assure you that such is in fact their nature, and that politicians share it.'

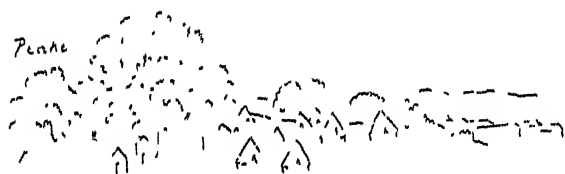
'I still think that we shall know better this time,' said the Young Soldier. 'The people have learnt the lesson of 1918, and if the statesmen show that they have *not* learnt it, we shall bundle them out in double-quick time.'

Captain Nick, who seemed to be growing progressively more unpleasant, gave a disagreeable sneer. 'The only thing that men learn from history', he said, 'is that men learn nothing from history; the same causes produce the same effects; there is nothing new under the sun; human nature never changes; after this war we shall go back to the same old world of 1939, with its booms and its slumps and its unemployment, its snobbery and its hypocrisy and injustice, its poverty in the midst of plenty, and its multitudinous restrictions on the production of the things that men want, but haven't the money to buy.'

'I don't believe a word of it,' said the Young Soldier, 'and you must be a hopeless cynic to say such things. In fact, now I come to think of it, Cynic is your name. Percy Nick, indeed! Captain Per-Cynic, I say.'

'Preparatory school wit!' said the Captain tartly. 'Really, I thought you young officers had got beyond the level of bad puns.'

'Preparatory school wit or not, I know a defeatist when I meet him,' said the Young Soldier. 'You're spreading alarm and despondency, and I won't have it.' As he said this, he rushed at the Captain, brandishing his 'swagger cane', intending either to knock him down, or arrest him and take him to the Guard Room, but just then Captain Nick turned up his eyebrows, expelled a jet of smoke from his lips and started to roar with laughter. At the same moment the Young Soldier noticed a pair of horns sticking up through his hair. This so startled the Young Soldier, that his onrush was arrested in mid career. When he recovered himself,



Captain Nick had already left the ground, and was rising slowly into the air. The last thing the Young Soldier saw of him was the end of his tail dangling like the rope of a captive balloon. But he smelt him for some time after that and the smell was the smell of brimstone.

The Young Soldier continued his walk somewhat pensively. Presently he heard a booming sound, and decided to go and see who or what was responsible for the noise. He made his way through a clump of trees and came to a platform, upon which there stood a large man engaged in oratory. He had a big head, prominent eyes, the wide-spreading nostrils of the dramatic orator, a voice of brass and lungs of leather. As far as the Young Soldier could see nobody was listening to him so, feeling sorry for him, the Young Soldier sat down on the ground to hear what he had to say. The orator was speaking of the post-war world.

'We aim', he was saying, 'at the establishment of economic conditions based on justice, security and social unity. There must be no more want, and no more fear—neither fear of war, nor fear of poverty. Everybody must be assured of a good job at a fair wage. We must, then, plan our resources so as to ensure the utmost utilization of the productive capacity of the nation. This means that we cannot go back to the old system of unrestricted private enterprise. After the last war we abandoned too rapidly the war-time controls. We know better now, and many of the controls that have been set up in this war must be retained after it.'

At this, the Young Soldier pricked up his ears remembering that Capt. Nick had said that all the war-time controls would be removed at the earliest possible moment after the war, and though he did not believe the Captain, especially since he had revealed himself to be a fiend, he wanted reassurance from the obviously eminent and important statesman who was addressing him.

'May I,' he asked, 'as the only member of your audience, have your permission to ask you a question?'

'Oh yes,' said the speaker. 'I am always delighted to answer the people's questions; that is the new Brains Trust technique that Huxley and Joad and Campbell have popularized. It is very democratic and we have all adopted it, though of course, with improvements.'



'Thank you,' said the Young Soldier. 'I understood you to say that after the last war all the Government controls were quickly taken off, and the job of restarting industry and turning the wheels of a peace-time world was left to the initiative of individuals, that is to say, to the business man's hope of making profits out of somebody else's labour. Now, I am told that some of these business men are already in charge of the different Departments and Commissions that are controlling commodities at the present time. There is a steel owner for the control of steel, an oil magnate for the control of oil, and so on. I have also heard that the wartime controllers are planning things in such a way as to give themselves a good start in the race for trade and profits which will begin when the controls are taken off. Take shipbuilding, for example. I have heard that some of the ships that are now being built are not as effective as they might be for war-time purposes, because the people who are responsible for building them have one eye on their use for peace-time purposes after the war. Whether all this is true, I don't know. But what I'd like to know is why, since the business men seem already to be running things, what happened after the last war won't happen after this war.'

'That is easy to answer,' said the orator. 'We should not think of making the same mistakes as they made in 1918. We are far too wise for that.'

'Are statesmen really so much better and wiser than they were twenty-five years ago?' asked the Young Soldier. 'I wish I could believe it.'

'Most certainly we are,' said the speaker, 'in fact we are the wisest people on earth. What is more we have an innate capacity for government. That is why we have got the greatest Empire that the world has ever seen.'

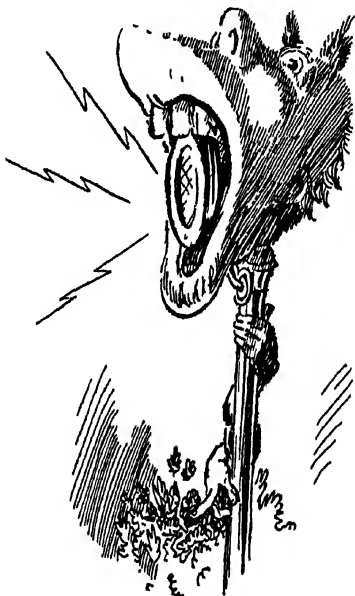
'Is that also why we have been losing it?' asked the Young Soldier.

But the speaker did not hear him. 'That is why the Almighty put us outside Europe,' he went on, 'in order that we could rule it better. I wonder that you, a member of His Majesty's forces, should wish to throw doubt upon these obvious truths. I am not sure that I shall not have you arrested and dismissed the service for spreading alarm and despondency.'

‘No, you won’t,’ said the Young Soldier, ‘for it is obvious to me that you are not wise at all, but only a poor fool who is so fond of hearing the sound of his own voice that he speaks to the empty air. For, you know, you had nobody at all to listen to you until I came.’

As he said this, the Young Soldier sprang forward to knock the speaker off his pedestal, but meanwhile the speaker’s face was undergoing a curious change. First, it turned black, then the two prominent eyes disappeared, while the head began to dwindle, and the mouth opened until it became a great yawning hole. The body meanwhile had shrunk into a metal stalk. When the Young Soldier reached the place where the orator had been, he found there was nothing there but a loud-speaker from which came an announcer’s voice saying, ‘You have just been listening to Mr. Speakeasy, member-for ——— telling us about the better world after the war.’

The Young Soldier continued his walk. He had not gone far before he became aware of a curious droning noise punctuated by intermittent howls. Amid the general confusion of sound two voices, a higher and a lower, were distinguishable; sometimes they sounded separately, as though one were replying to the other; sometimes they were blended, as the partners in a duet will sing each his separate verse but join together in the chorus. Presently, through a clearing, the young soldier saw a building in the Gothic style with crenellated turrets and battlements. Over the entrance hung a large board bearing the announcement, ‘Offices of the Blood and Vengeance League’. At each end of the building there was a tower surmounted by a weather vane and to the top of





each vane was lashed a figure; it was from these vanes, or rather from the figures that topped them, that the droning sound that the Young Soldier had heard seemed to come. One of the figures was short and dark; he had a distinguished face, a high forehead and fierce eyes. He seemed unable to keep still on his vane but agitated his arms and legs in a perpetual frenzy of excitement. Upon the base of his tower there were chiselled the words, 'Mr. Escapegoat, Diplomat and Servant of the State'.

The other wore the garb of a priest of the Church of England. His face was red and his habit full and he intoned in a high sing-song voice. Upon his tower there was graven the name of the 'Rev. Hateman, Servant of God'.

As the Young Soldier approached, a mighty wind began to blow; or it may be that it had been blowing all the time in the vicinity of the building which was the vortex of a perpetual storm, although twenty yards away there was calm. Mixed with the wind were the strains of Wagnerian music. As it beat in swirling gusts round the towers, the gale blew the vanes hither and thither so that the two figures swinging sometimes this way sometimes that whirled to every point of the compass in turn. Both were singing, or rather, intoning. When the vanes faced different ways, the two figures answered one another, intoning their words in a kind of vocal counterpoint. When they faced the same way, they gave tongue simultaneously and chanted in unison, thus producing the howling effect which had first attracted the Young Soldier's attention. The dark and lonely scene, the intermittent whining of the gale on which the voices sometimes swelled and sometimes were swept away into inaudibility, the gloomy building, the whirling vanes and the savage aspect of the figures who were lashed to them, suggested to the Young Soldier a scene out of the Valkyries.

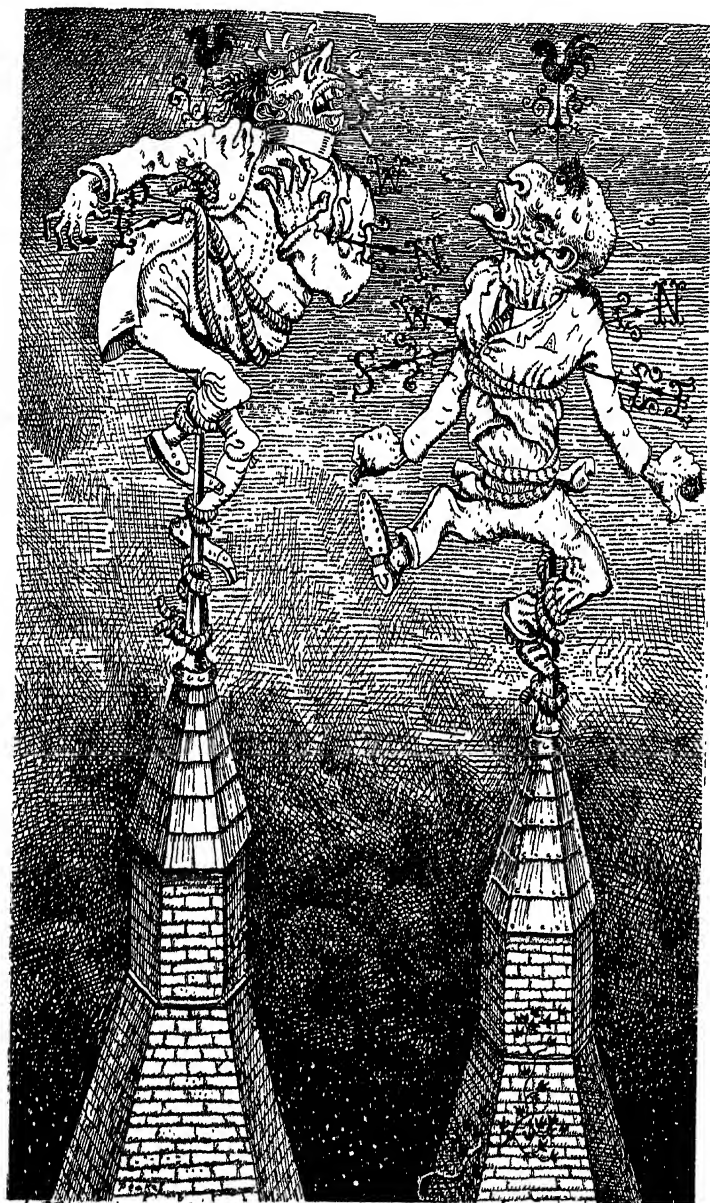
His curiosity was aroused and he decided to question the two figures. Just as he reached the building, the two vanes swung round together, the figures faced him and the voices blended and chanted in unison:

*The Germans are not the Herrenvolk.*

*We are the Herrenvolk.*

*The Germans are the children of darkness.*

*We are the children of light.*



*The Germans must be destroyed  
But we must rule the world.  
God wills it so  
And God is with us.*

As soon as the chanting had finished, the Young Soldier walked up to Mr. Escapegoat's tower, put his hands to his mouth and hailed him: 'Ahoy there,' he shouted. 'Excuse me, sir, but I happen to be in search of the better world after the war. Can you tell me how and where it is to be found?'

Mr. Escapegoat snorted. 'There can be no better world', he said, 'until we have destroyed the Germans.'

'I agree that we've got to beat them,' said the Young Soldier, 'and exterminate the Nazi leaders, but I don't see how you can destroy the German people.'

'The German people', replied Mr. Escapegoat, 'are sadistic, militaristic and materialistic. Therefore, they must be destroyed.'

'And is that your contribution to the new and better world after the war?' asked the Young Soldier.

'All this woolly talk about the world after the war makes me sick,' said Mr. Escapegoat. 'I have no patience with your better worlds and new orders and societies for making the world safe for mediocrity, guaranteeing everybody a living wage whether he's worth it or not, and all the rest of the sycophantic spittle with which politicians lick the boots of the man in the street. Life is hard and full of suffering, and no amount of legislation will make it easy and happy. There is only one job that matters at the moment, the job that our statesmen are paid to do, and this is to see that the world is made safe for Great Britain. Now it cannot be safe for us as long as there are Germans in it; so, as I said before, we have got to destroy the Germans.'

'We are fighting against the creed of the Devil,' chimed in the Reverend Hateman. 'I am a priest so I can recognize the Devil when I see him, and I say that the German creed is of the Devil; its articles are brutality, bestiality, plunder, rape and fraud.'

'Your German is, of all foul and dirty fighters, the foulest and the dirtiest,' added Mr. Escapegoat.

'Paganism at its worst is less alien to Christianity than Prussianism at its best,' concluded Mr. Hateman.

At this point the wind swept the vanes in opposite directions and the two figures resumed their vocal counterpoint.

*Mr. Escapegoat:* 'The brutality of the Nazi is the necessary expression of the inherent vices of the German spirit. The symptoms of German viciousness are sometimes dormant like the ferocity of the tiger or the deadliness of the rattlesnake, but the viciousness is part of the organic make-up of the German race, just as the ferocity and the deadliness are part of the organic make-up of the brute and the reptile.'

*Mr. Hateman:* 'Of all the terrible necessities that God has laid upon us, the most imperative is that we should recognize evil and its eternal manifestation in the nature of Germans. It is right to hate evil; therefore, it is right to hate Germans.'

*Mr. Escapegoat:* 'We must change our natures, and ourselves become rattlesnakes to scotch the rattlesnake and tigers to kill the tiger.'

*Mr. Hateman:* 'What is Christianity? It is the religion of Christ, it means long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, justice and kindness. Therefore, I would use our Air Force to bomb Berlin until the hated city lies in ruins.'

*Mr. Escapegoat:* 'We cannot make peace with the Germans because they will not honour their pledged word. Therefore, there can be no treaty, but only destruction.'

Mr. Escapegoat and Mr. Hateman seemed as if they would go on like this for ever, so the Young Soldier, who was getting bored, decided to join in.

'I say,' he called out to Mr. Hateman. 'Who said "Judge not that ye be not judged" and "Vengeance is mine"?''

'But it is not vengeance we seek, but retribution,' retorted Mr. Hateman.

'What is the difference?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Retribution is vengeance carried out by those whose cause is just, upon those whose acts are unjust.'

'And who decides whose cause is just and whose acts are unjust?'

'Don't ask silly questions,' said Mr. Hateman. 'The cause of England is always just and of England's enemies always unjust.'

'I have been told that before,' said the Young Soldier, 'and I know now that people only say "Don't ask silly questions" when they don't know the answers. But what about forgiving our enemies?'

'Don't you try to teach me my business, young man,' said Mr. Hateman. 'Let me advise you to read your Bible, where you will find written in the last book—the last, and therefore the most modern book—the doom prescribed for a guilty city by St. John :—  
"Her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities. Render unto her even as she has rendered unto you." You see that the policy of reprisals in kind is actually *commanded*.  
"Double unto her double according to her works . . . in one day shall her plagues come—death and mourning and famine, and she shall burn with fire; for strong is the Lord God who has judged her." In that passage, young man, you will find the Christian answer to those who suffer from a corrupt and degrading compassion.'

'I thought that the Book of Revelation was meant to be interpreted symbolically,' said the Young Soldier.

'Not at all! All the Bible is to be interpreted literally. It is God's word and it means just what it says.'

'Does it mean just what it says about turning the other cheek, giving your coat to the man who has taken your cloak and loving your enemies?'

'Don't ask silly questions,' said Mr. Hateman.

'I am sorry to be tiresome,' said the Young Soldier, 'but I must ask you one more. Did you know, by the way, that the Germans say just the same things as we do about *their* being the instruments of God's will, and about God intending *them* to win the war.'

'Nonsense,' said Mr. Hateman.

'Oh, but they do.'

'Blasphemous devils!' commented Mr. Hateman.

'Suppose you had been born in Germany, don't you think you would agree with *them* about God's wishes and intentions?'

'It is an impossible and insulting supposition,' said Mr. Hateman. 'I refuse to be insulted.'

'Sorry that I should seem to have been disrespectful. My question was purely hypothetical. But I have got still another

for you, if you can bear it. If the Germans are wholly evil, as you say, why did the good God, in whom you believe, create them?’

‘He didn’t,’ said Mr. Hateman. ‘The Devil created them.’

And with that he began to sing again.

At this the Young Soldier, unable to bear any more of the singing, went up to Mr. Escapegoat and rather brusquely interrupted him.

‘I am,’ he said, ‘as I told you, in search of the better world after the war, and I am hoping that as a Diplomat and Servant of the State you might be able to give me some advice.’

‘Certainly, I shall be delighted to do so. It is clear, in the first place, that we must have peace, but in order to have peace we must settle the Germans. It is clear, in the second place, that the German mentality is quite different from that of all other human beings; therefore, we must take away from the Germans, once and for all, the ability to make war. The Treaty of Versailles let them off much too lightly. This time we must really make them suffer. With bleeding hands and bitter tears they must be made to rebuild the towns they have destroyed; in sorrow and repentance of spirit they must learn their fate, which is to be the servants of those European nations which, in the days of their conquest, they so cruelly oppressed. I do not think that they will find easy masters. In sackcloth and ashes . . .’

‘Yes, I know all that,’ the Young Soldier interrupted, ‘I have heard it all before. But may I ask you a question?’

‘Why yes! I am always pleased to answer the questions of the young.’

‘Well, first of all, if you threaten the Germans with this terrible fate when we have won the war, won’t they all rally behind Hitler and fight to the last ounce of their courage and capacity, in order to avoid it? Whereas, if you promise them easy terms, once they have got rid of the government of gangsters and thugs that now oppresses and drives them, they might be more ready to revolt against the Nazis in order to get peace. For it is only some of the Germans after all who support the Nazi rule.’

‘That question only shows your ignorance, my boy. The Germans are all alike; therefore they all support the Nazis who are the perfect expression of their sub-human mentality. Even those

Germans who were brought up under a different régime now support them.'

'That is a wicked lie,' said the Young Soldier. 'I know several Germans who do not support them. Why do you tell such lies? And why don't you answer my questions? I asked you how we



were to make a better world and your only answer is that we must destroy the Germans. Well, what I want to know is, how are you going to do it? You've never told us that! We tried it on, I am told, in 1919 only twenty-four years ago, but now the Germans are stronger than ever. You say that the Treaty of Versailles was too light; but what more could we have done? Raze the German cities to the ground, plough up the land and sow it with salt, as the Romans did with Carthage? Castrate the German males or

sterilize the German women so that no more little Huns shall be born? Or supposing that this sort of thing is a little too steep even for you and Mr. Hateman, what about breaking up Germany into a number of separate little States and so adding to the confusion of Europe by Balkanizing its centre as well as its south-east? Is *that* what you would propose and, if not, can you tell me what you *do* propose?’

But instead of answering, Mr. Escapegoat and the Reverend Hateman again raised their voices in unison and began to chant:

*The Germans are not the Herrenvolk,  
We are the Herrenvolk . . .*

An old crab-apple tree happened to be growing close to the Young Soldier, so deciding that he had had enough, he picked up a handful of windfalls from the ground and started taking pot shots at Mr. Escapegoat and Mr. Hateman. The apples were at once hard and rotten, and as the Young Soldier was a good shot, many apples scored direct hits. Presently one got Mr. Escapegoat full on the nose, whereupon he came unlashd from his vane, extruded a pair of wings and uttering shrieks of pain and terror, flapped slowly away like a great bat, closely followed by the Reverend Mr. Hateman.

Somewhat shaken by this encounter, the Young Soldier walked rapidly away through the wood. Presently, he saw lying on the grass at the foot of a tree a young woman.<sup>1</sup> Some would have called her beautiful; others, lush. She had big eyes, ripe, red lips, and a nice figure. She also had red talons, which were displayed uninvitingly on the green sward. She called to him in a winning voice, saying: ‘Where are you going so quickly, my good sir?’

‘I am going in search of the better world after the war,’ said the Young Soldier.

<sup>1</sup> I cannot defend the inclusion of this character. She was put in in deference to the views of male readers serving in H.M. Forces, who urged that there should be at least one woman in the book, pointing out that you get a better class of woman in books. ‘What about Miss Ame?’ I asked; but Miss Ame, they said, was too small to qualify. I am anxious to please, so here, according to specification, the woman is—but I am afraid she is a bit disappointing. An additional reason for inclusion was that I thought she would make a nice picture for Mr. Peake. But he thought not. C.E.M.J.



'Come into my arms and forget it,' said the young woman, and she stretched out her arms invitingly.

'Not to-night, Josephine,' said the Young Soldier huffily, dropping, I am afraid, as his generation always did in moments of emotional stress, into the vernacular of the films. 'But if her nails hadn't been bloodied,' he reflected, as he walked resolutely on, 'there might have been something doing. What extraordinary mistakes', he thought, 'women do make about what men want. After all these years, you would have thought they'd have got to know.'

The Young Soldier was walking so rapidly to get away from the young woman that he almost bumped into a jolly-looking man, with a protuberant tummy, a shiny face and twinkling eyes.

'Eh, lad, be careful where you are going,' he said in a strong Yorkshire accent. 'And was it you making that awful noise?'

The Young Soldier explained: 'That', he said, 'was Mr. Escapegoat.'

'Was it?' said the gentleman. 'I shouldn't take any notice of him. Nobody takes him seriously. You see, he's got a power complex.'

'What is that?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Well, he has had a lot of power in the past and it has rather gone to his head. You remember what Lord Acton said?'

'No, what was that?'

'"Power always corrupts; absolute power absolutely corrupts. All great men are bad." Well, I wouldn't say that Mr. Escapegoat is a great man, and I wouldn't say that he is absolutely bad, but he is becoming so obsessed with all this anti-German stuff, that I'm beginning to think he's not quite right in the head. And the interesting thing is that he never notices that the more he curses and threatens and cries vengeance, the more he gets like the people he is cursing and threatening and trying to take vengeance on. If ever the Nazi mentality got into an Englishman, it has got into him. But what set him off?'

'Well, you see,' said the Young Soldier, 'I am trying to find out how we can have a better world after the war and I thought he might know. But instead of telling me, he only trotted out all this stuff about the wickedness of the Germans and taking it out of them to show how superior we are.'



‘You should have come to me. I am Mr. Transportouse and I know the answer to your question. In fact, my friends and I have written it all out very clearly and carefully, so that young chaps like you should know what we stand for and should vote for us when we have an election at the end of the war. I am sorry I haven’t a copy of it with me now.’

‘Won’t you tell me?’ said the Young Soldier. ‘I do very much want to know.’

‘Well, what does a man—a working man let us say, for I don’t really see why we need bother our heads about those who don’t work—want from the community? You tell me.’

‘Well, he wants a job,’ said the Young Soldier.

‘Right. Of course he does and we shall see that he gets one; and in order to be in a position to do this, we must have control of most of the industries and services in which jobs are done. That means that we have got to take over the great resources of the community which must be run and managed by the State, just like the Civil Service and the Post Office. By the great resources of the community I mean those that supply most of the needs of the people and employ the great bulk of the people—coal and iron and steel and the industries that mine and make them. Then there are the modern raw materials of power, gas and petrol and electricity; there are the transport industry, the railways and the buses and lorries, the canals and docks and ships. There are the staple commodities used in the making of clothes and fabrics, cotton and wool and the industries connected with them. There is building --we have got to see that people get the houses they want, and probably—though the Party I represent has never been quite sure about this—there is agriculture. Incidentally, it is only when the community controls these industries and services that we can feel certain that they are being directed to doing and producing what the community most needs, which is not always, by the way, what will bring the most profit to those who own and run them. So the community must have supplies of credit at its disposal, which means that it must own the credit and investment institutions such as the banks and the insurance companies. First of all, then, we are committed to nationalizing the great services and industries of the country, compensating their present owners and then running them in the

public interest as a public concern. What else does the ordinary man want?’

‘Well, he wants a decent wage for his work.’

‘Right! Then we must fix by law a national minimum wage, so that no single worker in the country can get less than that, though in fact many should and will get more. What else?’

‘What about his family? Is he to get the same wage if he is a single man as he would do if he had a wife and ten kids?’

‘Not at all. We shall pay an extra allowance for his family—a pound a week for a married man in respect of his wife, and five shillings for each of his children. In other words, we shall pay family allowances.’

‘What happens when he is out of a job?’

‘Because he is too old to work?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then we must pension him off, as we pension off our Civil Servants, say, at sixty or perhaps even before, giving him at least two pounds a week, for self and wife.’

‘But supposing he falls into unemployment, while he is still capable of working?’

‘Sir William Beveridge has solved all that for us. He has devised a Social Insurance Scheme to which of course the worker contributes, as a result of which a man and his wife will get two pounds a week to live on, so long as the man’s failure to get a job is not his own fault. Of course we have a Social Insurance System now, but we shall be able to make a much more generous provision for an unemployed worker and the whole scheme will be much easier to run, when the welfare of the workers is the responsibility of the community as a whole which is employing them and to which they themselves belong. Is there anything else that the worker wants?’

‘Yes, plenty of leisure and the knowledge of how to use it.’

‘Leisure’s easy. I have already said that there must be a national minimum wage; I now add that there must be a national maximum week. Nobody, then, is to be employed for longer than so many hours, say forty, a week.’

‘But how is he to use his leisure?’

‘That is not so easy and I am not sure that we can settle that by legislation. But I’m going to introduce you in a minute to somebody who can advise us. Is there anything else?’

‘Well, I don’t know that there is on the strictly economic plane. But, tell me, how are you going to do all this?’

‘That again is not so difficult as people make out. At the end of the war there will be a general election, when I hope the Party which I represent will be elected by a majority to power on a programme such as the one I have outlined. We shall proceed, as soon as we can, to nationalize the services and industries I mentioned, maintaining in the meantime all the controls that have been built up during the war. We shall do this fairly gradually, taking perhaps half a dozen years or more on the job, and releasing men from the Forces and directing them into the various industries and services as we take control. I expect we shall have to keep the income tax pretty high, in order to pay compensation to the owners of the industries that we have taken over. There is one thing though that we have forgotten. Suppose that the worker is ill?’

‘Well, what then?’ said the Young Soldier.

‘He will be given full medical attention as part of his insurance benefits. And by full medical attention I don’t mean an over-worked Doctor dealing with a queue of panel patients to the tune of five minutes per patient. I mean a Doctor who gives as much time to his poor as to his rich patients and who prescribes precisely the same treatment, that is to say, just as elaborate treatment for his poor as for his rich patients.’

‘What do you mean by that?’

‘Let us suppose that I have a pain in my tummy,’ said Mr. Transportouse, rubbing this somewhat protuberant feature, ‘and that the cause may be either indigestion which can be cured by a dose of Eno’s Fruit Salts, or an appendix which requires that my tummy shall be opened up and an elaborate operation performed, involving the attendance of a Doctor, an anaesthetist and two or three nurses, followed by a month in a Nursing Home, the whole entailing prodigious expenditure by me. Now the Doctor, let us say, does not know which it is; but we give him every incentive to say “Eno’s Fruit Salts” to the poor man and “appendix” or whatever it may be to the rich one. In other words, we make it his

interest to prescribe one treatment for the rich and another for the poor.

‘Well now, I want to put the Doctor in a position in which his economic livelihood won’t depend upon the number of his patients and the kind of treatment he prescribes for them. I propose, then, to make him a servant of the State with a fixed minimum salary. Promotion and increase of salary will take place as in the Civil Service according to merit and seniority, provided of course that there is efficient discharge of duties. Is there anything else?’

‘All that sounds splendid,’ said the Young Soldier, ‘as far as it goes. But it is a bit bread and buttery, isn’t it? I mean, it suggests that a man has a stomach which wants feeding and a pair of hands which want employment and a body that may go wrong and that, when he has done his day’s work, what he wants is to turn on his wireless, or go to the cinema, or work on his allotment, and that that is about all he *does* want—in fact, freedom from want and freedom from fear; peace, security, a good job at a fair wage, and leave it at that. I grant you that a man does want all these things and that he ought to have them. But doesn’t he want more? What about his mind, and—I know it’s an old-fashioned word, but I can’t think of a better—his soul? Doesn’t his mind want developing and his soul want cultivating? It seems to me—I hope you will forgive me for sounding rude, but a much greater man than I once said the same thing to an even greater man than you—that you are providing for a society of happy pigs.’

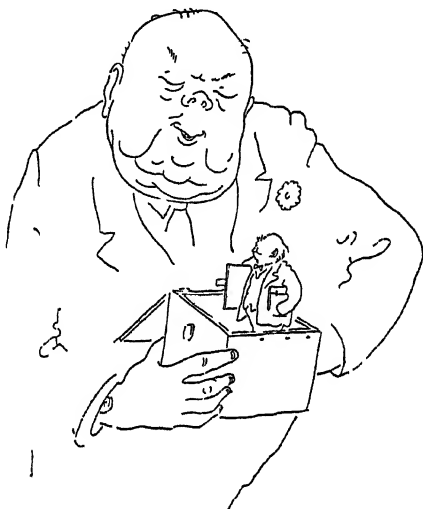
‘It isn’t rude at all,’ said Mr. Transportouse. ‘In fact, it is a very sensible criticism, which I am quite prepared to meet. Will you have the goodness to wait a moment while I fetch a couple of friends of mine?’ Mr. Transportouse disappeared for a moment into the wood, and came back carrying in his hand a little wooden box.

‘Now, please watch me very carefully,’ he said, ‘just to see there is no deception, while I conjure up my friends.’ Saying this, he pressed a knob on the side of the box; up jumped the lid, and out popped a little man, wearing a *pince-nez* and carrying a despatch case under one arm and a blackboard under the other.

‘Allow me to introduce Mr. Ema,’ said Mr. Transportouse. ‘His real name is Education for the Masses, only we call him Ema for short.’

Mr. Ema hopped out of the box like a bird, and sat down beside the Young Soldier.

'I must', he piped, 'grow a little larger, if I am to talk to you on equal terms. So will you excuse me, if I follow a well-known precedent? I think I shall find it just behind this tree here. Ah, here it is!'



As Mr. Ema was speaking, the Young Soldier noticed some mushrooms, growing apparently out of the roots of the tree. Mr. Ema picked one of these in his tiny hand and started to eat it, and then—well you know what happened then, because you can read all about it in Chapter V of *Alice in Wonderland*.

'That is better,' he said, when he was as large as the Young Soldier.

Again Mr. Transportouse pressed the knob, again the top flew open, and this time there popped out a little lady, dressed in a flowing robe which had obviously come from Liberty's. In one hand she carried an architect's T-square, and in the other an instrument which looked to the Young Soldier like a lyre. Obviously delighted to be out of the box, she plucked her lyre, trilled a note or two in a sweet, birdlike voice, sailed through the air and alighted upon the Young Soldier's knee.





'Miss Ame,' said Mr. Transportouse, 'allow me to introduce you to the Young Soldier who wants to know about our plans for him after the war. Miss Ame,' he explained, 'is our Ministress for Amenities in the post-war world, only we call her Ame for short'.

Mr. Transportouse regarded Miss Ame with a look of benevolent indulgence which he maintained throughout the whole of the lady's ensuing exposition. 'Very nice,' he seemed to be saying, 'very nice and agreeable, indeed; but you can't expect sensible men who have to deal with the hard facts of life to take this sort of thing very seriously.'

The Young Soldier shook hands, or rather he extended a finger which Miss Ame enclosed in her tiny fist. 'I am very glad to meet you,' he said.

Nor was this only a form of words, for he felt that with these three admirable guides, Mr. Transportouse, who understood the needs of the masses, Mr. Ema who proposed to educate and elevate their minds, and Miss Ame with her T-square and her lyre who would be responsible for cultivating their souls and providing for their leisure, he was really getting somewhere.

'Well now, let us begin with what we *don't* want,' said Mr. Ema.

'Yes, we must make it quite clear to him what we don't want and won't have,' said Miss Ame.

'We don't want a double system of education, one for the rich and one for the poor,' said Mr. Ema.

'And we don't want two kinds of houses, one for the rich and one for the poor,' chimed in Miss Ame.

'We don't want a lot of little snobby, preparatory and second-rate public schools scrambling and competing for the doubtful honour of mis-educating the diminishing supply of boys and girls from a dwindling and impoverished middle-class,' said Mr. Ema.

'And we don't want a scrimmage of competitive builders all trying to put up, at the lowest possible prices, mass produced, gimcrack, bijou, mock Gothic, half-timbered, Jacobethan residences,' said Miss Ame. 'And unless we are careful that is what we will get,' she added, shaking an admonitory finger at the Young Soldier. 'People after the war will be demanding houses of any kind and at any price. They will be prepared to put up with temporary buildings, if they can't get anything better, and temporary buildings will be put up. Meanwhile, thousands of building operatives

will be flooding back into their trade at the head of a vast army of unskilled workers, who will be clamouring for any kind of job that is going and hope to find it in building houses. And so we shall have a clamour from people wanting houses, a clamour from builders anxious to supply the houses that people want, and a clamour from hundreds of thousands of workers anxious to build the houses which the builders are anxious to supply—and all of them demanding that their demands shall be satisfied on the spot.'

'And what do you think the result of all that will be?' said the Young Soldier. 'Chaos, I should think.'

'Chaos it will be,' she echoed, nodding her head at him like an intelligent robin. 'Can anybody believe that a spacious, a noble and a beautiful Britain will result from the competitive effects of a lot of little builders, each scrambling for contracts, each scurrying and scamping his work in order to make the largest profit in the smallest time, with every builder out-gimcracking and out-jerrying his neighbour.'

'Right you are,' said the Young Soldier. 'It is agreed we are not going to have that. But how are you going to stop it?'

'The building industry must be organized as a public service, and all building schemes must be supervised and planned in advance by special planning authorities. No private firms to be allowed to put up houses except as part of a general plan and subject to such limitations, in the matter of design, spacing and so on, as the planning authority permits. In other words, the building industry must be controlled—I should like to say, it must be *owned*—by the State and that means, among other things, that there will be no more houses for the rich so long as the poor have to go without.'

'And no more education for the rich man's son,' said Mr. Ema, 'while the poor man's son goes without.'

'What about the Public Schools?' said the Young Soldier.

'Well, the Public Schools will have to go. At least what is good in them will have to be incorporated into a State system and made available for everybody. What they must not be allowed to get away with is what they are trying on now.'

'What are they trying on now?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Their idea is to take a number of clever boys free from the elementary and secondary schools in return for a minimum amount

of formal State supervision, thus skimming off the top drawer of working class ability, de-classing it, sterilizing its contents and making it useless for the purpose of social change, but otherwise going on as before. We have got to take the Public Schools over and run them for the benefit of all classes.'

'Right you are again,' said the Young Soldier, 'but what then? You can't abolish the Public Schools and leave the rest of the educational system just where it is.'

'Agreed! The educational system will have to belong to and be run by the community in the interests of the community as a whole. And when I say the community,'—Mr. Ema was earnest about this—'I mean the community, not a particular class of the community. You remember Disraeli's remark that we were two nations; it is still true and one of the reasons is that we ascend two different educational ladders—one giving access to the world of the powerful and the rich and the other to the world of the humble and the poor. That is why I insist that the State must have a monopoly of such education as is given, if only to ensure that all children get the same education, or rather that such differences as there may be are due only to the different propensities and abilities of the children. This means that every child will go up the same educational ladder, and will go up it just as far as his talents will take him.'

'I would like to hear some more about that,' said the Young Soldier. 'I know it sounds all right, but if you give the State a monopoly of education, why shouldn't the State abuse it, send our minds to prison and hand over to some Goebblesque official the keys of the cells? Look at the system of State education that they have in Germany and look at the results. The minds of all young Germans are poisoned, with the result that the thoughts that people think they think are not their thoughts but the thoughts of those who think that they ought to think *their* thoughts.'

'And I am not so happy either about the State control of building,' he added, looking down on Miss Amc. 'Won't it lead to a horrible uniformity? You see', he said, apologetically, 'I have had the object lesson of Germany fairly rubbed into me. I have learnt how there has grown up a generation of young Germans upon whom a single way of thinking, behaving, reading and writing,

even, for all I know, of working and playing and love-making has been imposed by law. In consequence, Germany has become a land in which whatever is not forbidden is compulsory. Now all this is the result of the State's poking its nose into every corner of everybody's life, and why, I want to know, should not State control have the same effect here?'

'Shall we tell him our plans?' said Mr. Ema.

'Yes. Remember that up to now we have only told you what we don't want and won't have,' said Miss Ame. 'Now we will tell you what we *do* want and are going to have. Will you begin?' she said, turning to Mr. Ema.

'Not at all, ladies first,' Mr. Ema bowed to Miss Ame.

'Not so. The mind is more important than the body, so the man of mind shall speak first,' the little lady returned Mr. Ema's bow.

'Very well then,' said Mr. Ema. 'I shall begin by laying down a principle. It is that the quality and quantity of education that a child receives shall depend on its own talents and abilities, and not upon any other consideration whatever; not, therefore, upon the amount of his father's bank balance. This means that we must all go to the same schools until we are fifteen, in order that we may have a chance of showing what our talents and abilities are. These schools will be free and they will also be compulsory. At fifteen there will be a break and an examination, both written and oral, as a result of which we hope to get enough data to decide whether a boy (or a girl—there will be no difference in the educational opportunities offered to the sexes) is suitable for what I will call "higher education". If he is, we shall send him from 15–18 to schools more or less modelled on the present public schools—of course under State supervision—and from 18–21 or 22, to a University modelled more or less on Oxford or Cambridge. His schooling and his University training will both be free and, I am inclined to think, compulsory. In other words, I should compel a talented young man to make the most of his talents, or at least compel him to attend those institutions in which his talents can be made the most of. Usually, of course, it is not the young man but the parents who object, and so, if his parents are poor, we shall have to provide them with State allowances to feed and clothe him while we, that is to say, the community, are educating him. If, as a result of the

examination, he is judged not suitable for higher education, he will go to a technical school and later perhaps to a technical College, where he will be given training in a profession, for example, engineering or accountancy, or a manual craft such as tailoring, or weaving or mining, so that he can afterwards make his way in the world as the skilled practitioner of a trade. At the same time he will get a minimum of what one might call cultural education. In order to ensure that he does get it, when he leaves his school or college and takes up work in, let us say, an engineering shop, he will still be required to do not less than five or six hours compulsory non-vocational education a week in his employer's time for which the State will pay.

'I have got all sorts of ideas for the continued education of people when they grow up. It is silly to suppose that we have mastered all that it will ever be necessary for us to know at 22, and can afford to neglect our minds thereafter. Even the engine of a car wants de-carbonizing every two or three years; even a house is usually let on a seven years' repairing lease; and what a car needs to keep it in proper going order, or a house to keep it in proper repair, a mind needs even more. So what about a year's compulsory holiday for everybody at forty, during at least half of which a man would have to go back to College, not only to attend courses in the developments in his own profession, but to be put *au fait* with what is happening in the world of thought since he took leave of it? I daresay that an additional three months' refresher course every five years at a University would not be amiss, and I am inclined to make that, too, obligatory for every citizen.'

'Splendid,' said the Young Soldier, 'but what is it all for? I mean what is the point of all this intensive education? You have not said anything about that.'

'There is no point,' said Mr. Ema, 'or rather there is no one point. There is a number.'

'What are they?'

'Here are three. First, vocational; to train a boy or girl to earn his or her living, when he or she goes out into the world as a skilled member of a trade, craft or profession; in other words, to abolish unskilled labour.

'Secondly, social; to bring up a child with an independent, alert

and critical mind, so that he may be a valuable citizen of his society. A valuable citizen will have a knowledge of the history and constitution of his country, and of the way in which it is governed. Somewhere in his mind there is a map of the modern world and he knows, too, what events have led up to the world situation in which he is living. He is thus in a position to pass an individual judgement upon contemporary affairs and to assess and criticize, to criticize, that is to say, with knowledge, the policy of his government. Having a critical mind, he will not be beglamoured by dictators, gulled by propagandists, taken in by advertisements or doped by quack medicines. I would like to add, but I hardly dare hope, that he will not be doped by any of the quack medicines for the mind, by Astrology or Christian Science or Spiritualism or Theosophy or any of the other contemporary aspirins for the sick headache of humanity.

‘Thirdly, there is the education which is directed to the development and cultivation of one’s personality. We have got to help the citizen to become a complete person by realizing all that he has in him to be. To the child it is what perfect gardening is to the tree, a help so to grow that it may become completely itself. Just as the gardener helps each tree to put forth and develop as completely as possible the essential and distinctive quality of its kind, the quality that differentiates it from all the other trees, so should the educator help the child to develop whatever is distinctive in his own personality. It should help him, then, to become as completely as possible himself.’

The Young Soldier was delighted with all this and turned expectantly to Miss Ame.

‘Now, Madam,’ he said, ‘are you going to tell me about the way people are going to live in the better world after the war?’

‘I can’t tell you that,’ said the little lady. ‘I know how I would like to live myself, but I have learnt better than to insult other people by trying to do unto them what I would have them do unto me. After all their tastes may be different—in fact they *are* different. But I think I can tell you something about the houses they are going to live in, and something about the provision that we shall make for their leisure.’

‘Go ahead,’ said the Young Soldier.

'Well, first of all, they are going to live in flats.'

'Golly,' said the Young Soldier, 'they won't like that. Don't you know that the working man must have his bit of garden? He wants to grow cabbages, keep rabbits and generally muck about at the back in his spare time.'

'Wait a bit,' said Miss Ame. 'How many working men do you think have gardens now?'

'I don't know,' said the Young Soldier.

'Neither do I,' said Miss Ame cheerfully, 'but nothing like so many as you think—not fifty per cent by a long chalk; and even when they do have them, they are about the size of a pocket handkerchief, and a dirty handkerchief at that. All covered with smuts, you know,' she said, shaking her head at him knowingly.

'But I don't see how living in flats is going to make that any better,' said the Young Soldier.

'That is because you will keep interrupting. Now listen to me. Our cities are too big; we all agree to that, don't we?'

'I agree,' said the Young Soldier.

'Of course you do, but spare me your agreement and listen, because we have only got a few minutes before Mr. Transportouse puts us both back into his box.' ('You see,' she added archly, 'he doesn't like me to be out too long with my political frills and graces, as he calls them. He is always wanting to get back to his bread and butter economics and he feels a bit embarrassed, if he gives Mr. Ema and me too much of an airing.')

Mr. Transportouse gave the Young Soldier a covert wink, and nodded his agreement.

'Well, as I was saying, our cities are too big. They are too large and they are too spread out. During the last thirty years the towns have burst like bombs and scattered their *débris* in the shape of ribbon development, dormitory suburbs, bungaloid outbreaks, villa rashes, gas works, water-works, mental homes, poor houses, sewage farms, cemeteries, prisons and the Lord knows what, all over the surrounding countryside. What is the result?'

Mr. Transportouse grinned at the Young Soldier, 'She has got it all pat, right enough,' he said. 'I hope nothing happens to disappoint her.'

Miss Ame took no notice of the interruption. 'First,' she went

on, 'there is no room for any gardens that are worth calling gardens inside the cities.'

'Secondly, the country is pushed a terrible long way off. If you live in the country and want to get to the city to your work, you have to travel miles every morning and evening, burrowing like a mole in the bowels of the earth, and you clutter up the transport



system. If you live in the city and want to go into the country at week-ends, you have again to spend mole-like hours in the Tube from which you emerge blinking like an owl into God's sunlight and again you clutter up the transport system.

'Thirdly, if we go on building and sprawling at the present rate we shall eat up the country altogether. There just isn't enough England to go round. That is why we must not go on building garden cities.'

'I don't quite see that,' said the Young Soldier.

'They take up too much room. Two or three are well enough—although, the Lord knows, Welwyn and Letchworth and Bournville



and Port Sunlight are not much to be proud of—but if you were to try to house all the workers in garden cities, you would have the whole of England spotted with satellite towns, surrounded with ever diminishing green belts, studded with a few mummified beauty spots, complete with preserved rustics and, except for a few wild places somewhere up in the North, no country at all. What is more, you would have enormously aggravated your transport problem. No, the only thing to do is to bunch the population up, and that, as I said, means flats.’

‘Good Lord!’ said Mr. Transportouse, roused for once out of his air of slightly patronizing indulgence. He had not realized the significance of this proposal, when Miss Ame had thrown it out before, but this time apparently it had penetrated. ‘What on earth has put flats into your head? You will never get that across, you know.’

‘When I say flats,’ said Miss Ame severely, ‘I mean flats. But please put out of *your* head anything you have ever seen or heard of in this country. Don’t think of tenement buildings, or even of model L.C.C. dwellings, or the abominations Labour Councils put up and are so proud of. Think rather of those blocks of flats which the Socialist Municipality erected to house the workers of Vienna. You have never seen or heard of them? Well, they were such an outrage in a properly conducted Capitalist State—it was such an affront to the rich to see the workers as well or better housed than they were, that the time came when the rulers of Austria could not bear them any longer, so Dollfuss sent his thugs to bombard them and knocked a lot of them to bits. Well, *we* shall re-create them.

‘Imagine, then, a block of flats designed by some first-rate architect, Gropius, let us say——’ Mr. Transportouse raised his eyebrows enquiringly at the Young Soldier, as much as to say, ‘Who has she got hold of now?’. ‘The walls are for the most part made of toughened glass, so the flat dwellers get the maximum of light and air. On the expanse of flat roof there are sun bathing cubicles, flower gardens laid out by competent gardeners, a café where you can get a drink, and a restaurant. In the large quadrangle in the centre of the block there is a lawn with fountains playing in the middle. I am not sure that there is not a small open-air theatre; there is certainly a cinema screen. There are sand-

pits and pens for the babies and, speaking of children, did I hear you ask how mother is going to get the perambulator up the stairs?’

‘No, you didn’t.’

‘Well, you ought to have. And, of course, the answer to that silly question is that she doesn’t have to—there is a special lobby for perambulators at the bottom of each block and anyway there is a lift to take mother and the kids and the perambulator and anything else, up to the roof, if they want to go there.

‘Now think of the advantages——’ Miss Ame proceeded to tick them off one by one on her fingers as she jiggled up and down on the Young Soldier’s knee in her enthusiasm. ‘First, cities are small and, therefore, the worker lives near his work. No transport problem!

‘Secondly, when the cities stop, they stop. The mediaeval town was surrounded by a wall, which meant that it had to contain itself whether it wanted to or not. So it had a shape and was built to a plan. Well, I don’t know that I would put a wall round our cities—though I am not sure that even that would be a bad thing—but I would have them stop short, just as if there was one.

‘Thirdly, because the cities do stop short, the country is at your door or, at most, it is only a ten minutes’ walk away and that means that your garden or your allotment is only a ten minutes’ walk away; so—and here is a fourth advantage—though it is not at your back door, it is ten times bigger than it would be, if it was.

‘Fifthly—very important—people living in a block of flats such as I’ve imagined with café and restaurant and cinema and crèche would develop some sort of social consciousness. They would feel themselves members of a little community, instead of being, as they are now, a lot of separate human units living isolated from one another in little suburban brick boxes, most of them never knowing their neighbours, never meeting one another and probably never talking to one another, except over the backyard wall and then, more likely than not, only talking to have a row.’

‘Yes, and I’ve got something to say there,’ said Mr. Ema, who all this time had been squatting quietly on his haunches smoking a pipe. ‘I want to see in every village a social and educational centre.’

The Young Soldier made a face.

‘Yes, I know it sounds awful, but let me take a leaf out of the book of my charming colleague and try and present a picture for you, though I haven’t got either her imaginative powers or her descriptive flow. Here, let us suppose, is a scattered rural area, inhabited by people who are getting their living from the soil. Some of them are living on lonely farms, others in villages; but the villages, as you know, are pretty dead. The men meet over their beer in the pub and the women meet, I suppose, in the Women’s Institute. There is a Fair, say, and an annual Flower Show—and that’s about all. No life in the Church, no life in the big house—even if anybody is still living there! Well, I am going to get a first-rate modern architect—Gropius, I think you said, Miss Ame—in fact a *corps* of architects to put up in every village a sort of communal centre where people can meet. I don’t know quite what name to give it, but I will call it provisionally a College, because, first of all, the children will be going to school there. And please bear in mind that part of their schooling is going to be out of doors, which means a playground, swings, a sand-pit, playing fields and so on. Schooling is not to stop, you will remember, at fifteen, so there will be rooms where the grown-ups can attend classes, lectures and demonstrations,—there will be cookery demonstrations, jam bottling, canning, and all that sort of thing, which is again why I call it a College. And they are going to be properly furnished rooms with easy chairs, thick carpets, attractive curtains made of excitingly coloured materials, so as to give a gay, informal atmosphere,’ while the lectures will be delivered from a brightly-lit stage. In the same building there is a cinema and there is probably a theatre, and something is on every night. There is a dance hall, a billiard room, and—most important this—under the same roof there is a restaurant and outside a café with tables on the terrace. It is going to be a properly run restaurant with, of course, a licence. There is to be a reading room with newspapers and magazines and a library. Food for the body and food for the mind, you see, under the same roof. You can see an advance edition of the sort of thing I mean in the Colleges which Henry Morris—one of the few men of our time with vision, by the way—has been putting up in the villages of Cambridgeshire.

‘What put me on to all this was Miss Ame’s remark about the

need for social centres. Well, why shouldn't the two centres, the block of flats and the College, be amalgamated?'

'Excellent!' said Miss Ame, clapping her hands. 'Of course, we must combine the two. Build your Colleges on to my blocks of flats, or my blocks of flats on to your Colleges. Or the two could face each other across a quadrangle; or a crescent block of flats could be built round a College in its centre. A good architect could make a first-rate job of it.

'But you haven't forgotten, have you,' she said, turning to the Young Soldier, 'that I am Ministress of Amenities and I have not told you half the things that I mean to do. How much a day do you think we are paying for the war?'

'I forget,' said the Young Soldier, 'but I think it runs into something like twelve millions.'

'Right,' said Miss Ame. 'Well, we are going to continue expenditure at that rate for at least a month after the war is over, which means that we are going to have enough money to finance half a dozen orchestras which will travel up and down the country, giving free concerts to the people. What is more, I am going to provide a proper pension scheme for members of the orchestras, so that they have something to live on when they are past playing. I mean to do the same for a National Theatre, set up Repertory theatres in the provincial towns and establish a national *corps* of State actors and ballet dancers. Incidentally, and by the way, we have got to put up fresh halls in most of the towns at which the concerts can be given. Most of the towns of this country can't boast a single decent hall in the place; there are only those awful cinemas. There are all sorts of other things I could mention—for example, travelling libraries of pictures to go round the towns and villages with shows by modern artists to be changed every month. I am going to keep the countryside countryfied, and make the Lake District, Snowdon, the Sussex Downs, the Peak District, Dartmoor, the New Forest, the Cotswolds into National Parks. In and about the towns I am going to provide swimming baths, sports grounds, cafés, riverside restaurants, bands—every kind of open-air show. You know how badly we've always done that sort of thing in this country and you know too how, when one goes abroad to Copenhagen or Vienna or Paris, one notices at once the contrast. How

warm and gay and friendly the place is, with its gardens, its ornamental waters, its cafés, its bands, its lights and pavilions! And then one compares all that sort of thing, as it is in Paris, with the dreary wastes which we make of the open air spaces in our big towns. Look at the Vale of Health, for example, in Hampstead; a gift from nature if ever there was one. Here is a lake in a hollow, rising ground all round and little knolls surmounted by pine trees looking down on the water; terraces slope down to the lake. Is there a café, a verandah set with flowers and covered with little tables, an orchestra, lights, a promenade for young people, sitting-out places? No, of course there is not. Only a few sordid pubs and roundabouts and a general air of slumminess and squalor. Well now, I am going to change all that.'

'Change it you will and shall, my dear young lady,' said Mr. Transportouse who, all this time, had been listening with a smile of indulgent benevolence on his lips. 'But I think that will do for the present. We must never,' he went on, looking with a reproving glance at his two puppets, 'lose sight of the fact that the basic needs of the workers are for bread and butter. The basic needs must come first and the frills must come afterwards.'

'Frills!' said Miss Ame indignantly. 'I like that. Let me tell you, young man'—the Young Soldier looked up at this, thinking that she was addressing him, but it seemed that she was apostrophizing Transportouse himself—'let me tell you, young man,' she repeated, 'that man can't live by bread alone.'

'I daresay he can't,' said Mr. Transportouse drily, 'but bread he must have first, and bread is what he has never yet had. Four-fifths of the men and women who have ever lived—no, what do I say?—not four-fifths but nine-tenths or ninety-nine hundredths of the men and women who have ever lived, have not had enough bread. In toil and sweat they have wrung a meagre sustenance from nature; as slaves, as serfs, as wage slaves, they have laboured day in and day out to make wealth for somebody else. Ninety-nine hundredths of the men and women who have ever lived have never been sure where their next meal was coming from, but they have been sure that when it came it wouldn't be a square one. Now the machines have changed all that; we can produce to-day enough and to spare for all, provided that we have the sense to distribute for the benefit

of all what we produce. But we haven't had the sense, and we shan't have it as long as we allow the common resources of mankind to remain in private ownership; that is why the policy of the Party that I represent is first and foremost to transfer the common resources of the community to the ownership and control of the community. Then, when people have money and leisure, we can think about the frills. And that,' he concluded, 'is my last word to you, young man, as it was also my first. Mind you vote right at the next election, and tell your friends to vote right too.

'Now then, come along, little lady.' With that he bent down, whisked Miss Ame off the Young Soldier's knee where she was still sitting, put her into the box and snapped down the lid.

'Mr. Ema,' he said, 'I am afraid you will have to be slimmed down a bit. I see that you have grown altogether too big for your boots and for my box.'

'Mushrooms again?' asked Mr. Ema.

'No, not mushrooms this time, but one of the special reducing tablets which the research chemist we employ at Transportouse has prepared for rich capitalists.' So saying, Mr. Transportouse took a small bottle out of his waistcoat pocket, shook out a tablet into the palm of his hand and handed it to Mr. Ema.

'Come along now, swallow it like a good chap,' he said.

Making a wry face Mr. Ema popped the tablet into his mouth, swallowed it and immediately began to shrink. When he was once again reduced to his original dimensions, Mr. Transportouse picked him up, opened the box and popped him in.

'Well, I must be going now,' he said to the Young Soldier. 'I have got a Committee waiting for me. So good day to you and thank you for the interest you have shown.'

'Good day to *you*, sir,' said the Young Soldier. 'May I say how grateful I am to you for the guidance you have given me? What you and yours have said has been very helpful and enlightening; in fact you are the first person I have met who has talked sense to me at all.'

Mr. Transportouse was obviously delighted. 'Not at all, not at all,' he said, 'pleased at any time, I'm sure. . . .'

Whereat he clapped the Young Soldier heartily on the shoulder and walked off.

The Young Soldier was considerably encouraged by meeting three people who seemed to know what they wanted and who wanted something sensible. 'I hope they stay like that when they get power,' he said to himself. 'It is easy to talk ideals, but hard to translate them into practice, partly because in the effort to translate them you become a different person from what you were when you merely talked them. "Power corrupts" and all that, as Mr. Transportouse himself said. At present Miss Ame and Mr. Ema are only Jacks-in-the-box, called into being by the touch of Mr. Transportouse. Let us hope that the Jacks-in-the-box don't become Jacks-in-office—it has happened before especially *chez* Transportouse.'

On the whole, though, the Young Soldier was pleased. He had just decided that it was time to go back to the Mess to bed, when he heard the sound of laughter, not good honest laughter as of people enjoying themselves, but derisive laughter as of people contemptuous and feeling superior. At the same time the wood seemed to open out, the trees fell away and a hard bright light smote his eyes. It came from a number of high-powered arc lights which ran along the length of an asphalt track. On one side of the track was a row of factories lit by changing Neon signs carrying advertisements and fronted by an enormous variety of poles—telegraph poles, pylons, wireless masts, aerials and electric light standards, joined by a maze of criss-crossing ropes and wires. On the opposite side there stretched a long line of cliffs. These cliffs were of a very peculiar kind, being made not of rocks or chalk but—could they be? Yes, the Young Soldier decided that they were—of Government Department files. The files were piled up one on top of the other into a vast structure whose summit disappeared into the clouds, and in the shifting light of the arc lamps the Young Soldier read on their labels the names of the various departments—the Ministry of This, the Board of That, the Department of the Other. The files were enclosed in stiff covers bound with tape and covered with the multitudinous names of those to and from whom they had been minuted. This cliff of files ran along the whole of one side of the asphalt road and in their middle, just opposite to the Young Soldier, a dark hole gaped. It was from this hole that the laughter seemed to come, so the Young Soldier peered in to see what was there.

'Yes, I heard you,' said a voice.

'Heard what?' said the Young Soldier.

'Heard you arranging a nice, bright, better world after the war. Very nice it was, very nice and bright and comfortable indeed, but bless you, it won't happen like that,' and the voice broke into renewed laughter.

'Why won't it happen, and who are you anyway?' said the Young Soldier.

'I am the Red-tape Worm; would you like to see me?'

'Not much, I imagine. But how can you, as a logical, tidy-minded servant of the State, expect me to know whether I would like to see you or not until you show yourself?' said the Young Soldier.

'You *shall* see me! You *shall* see me!' said the voice.

There was a sound of rustling in the depths of the cave and the Red-tape Worm wriggled out on to a particularly fat file which formed the floor of its mouth. In appearance the Red-tape Worm was a lizardy-looking creature, a kind of cross between a small dragon and a large worm. His red appearance was due to the fact that his whole body was swathed in wrappings of tape. Along his back ran a spine, consisting of pins pointing outwards, and his legs were covered with scales made of paper clips which, instead of being stuck on to them from outside, apparently grew outwards from within. Round his neck was a ruff composed of minute sheets covered with writing in a great number of different hands. He was still laughing as he wriggled out into the open, and every time he opened his mouth to emit a fresh titter, there issued from it a thin stream of red ink which poured in a little cascade on to the fat file, giving it a very sanguinary appearance.

'Yes, I heard you,' he said again.

'And so did I,' thundered a voice from behind.

The Young Soldier turned quickly round and saw, on the other side of the road, a pedestal standing in front of the gate of a factory upon which stood a large figure with uplifted arm and open mouth. From its open mouth a kind of guffawing proceeded. But surely, thought the Young Soldier, it is a very odd sound, more like the clattering of tin cans than the emanations of the human throat; and that, surely, is a very odd figure. Is it really a man? The face looks as if it were made of some synthetic metal, or is it



perhaps a kind of leather? And what a complexion, not pink, not brown, not even pale, but a greenish white, such as one sees on fungi and insects that live in the dark. And no human mouth was ever as rectangular as that pillar-box slit. On closer inspection, however, the Young Soldier decided that the figure must be that of a man after all. It was so extraordinarily life-like, and, after all, it had, as he reminded himself, guffawed, was indeed still guffawing, and human beings, as is well known, are the only creatures who are capable of being amused.

Just then something happened which resolved his doubts. The figure on the pedestal held in his right hand a hammer, in his left a sickle. In front of him was a speaker's desk, from which protruded a row of nails. As the figure caught sight of the Young Soldier, the hammer was lifted and came down hard on the head of one of the nails, driving it home. At the same time the Young Soldier noticed a pole rising immediately behind the figure along the whole length of which ran a slot or groove. As the hammer drove in the nail, a small metal board shot rapidly up the groove. When it reached the top of the pole a bell sounded and the board was illuminated. It bore the notice 'Recruiting Speech'. 'Moderate strength rings the bell,' thought the Young Soldier, 'Great strength returns the recruit. But what is happening to his face?' For just as the bell sounded, the face lit up, the eyes shone with a green light, the mouth opened and speech issued forth.

'Why, it isn't a man at all,' said the Young Soldier, 'but only a Robot who has been wound up to go through the verbal reactions which his makers think appropriate.'

And a Robot it was, but a Robot ingeniously and most elaborately devised. Not only could it wave its arms and stamp its feet and talk; it could register impressions. Thus whenever in the ensuing conversation the Young Soldier made a point, the fact was registered by the sounding of a bell inside the Robot, while the face was illuminated with a variety of coloured lights ranging from green, when the point had been taken, to red when some objection was raised or some obstacle interrupted the flow of the exposition. Generally the face shone as it did now with the greenish white of 'Full Speech Ahead' exposition. An audience was provided by a row of young Robots who stood to attention in front of the figure



and from time to time made assenting noises and gestures. The speech of the Robot was divided into a number of sections, the introduction of each of which was signalized by a blow of the hammer which sent the board running up to the top of the pole bearing a fresh notice. When the end of the section was reached, the left hand swung round and the sickle cut a rope which brought the board tumbling down, to be succeeded by the driving home of more nails and the hoisting of more notices.

I suppose I had better say 'How do you do' and introduce myself, thought the Young Soldier, so he walked up and said: 'I am looking for the better world after the war. Do you mind telling me who you are and whether you can give me any information about it?'

'My name is Ultra-red,' said the Robot, 'and I was just instructing the comrades here in the Principles of Marxism when I was interrupted by the sound of your voice; so I stopped to listen to the unutterable tripe that you were talking to those Capitalist lick-spittles back there in the wood. It made me laugh it did,' and with that Mr. Ultra-red threw back his head and brought down his hammer bang upon a nail, sending up a notice entitled 'Scorn of Bourgeois Palliatives'. At the same time he emitted a roar of robust proletarian laughter. 'It was your plans for the world after the war that amused us,' said the Robot. 'One has to be amused by these Utopian fantasies, otherwise they would make one sick.'

'And what is there amusing about them?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Simply that they won't happen.'

'I have already told him that,' said the Red-tape Worm.

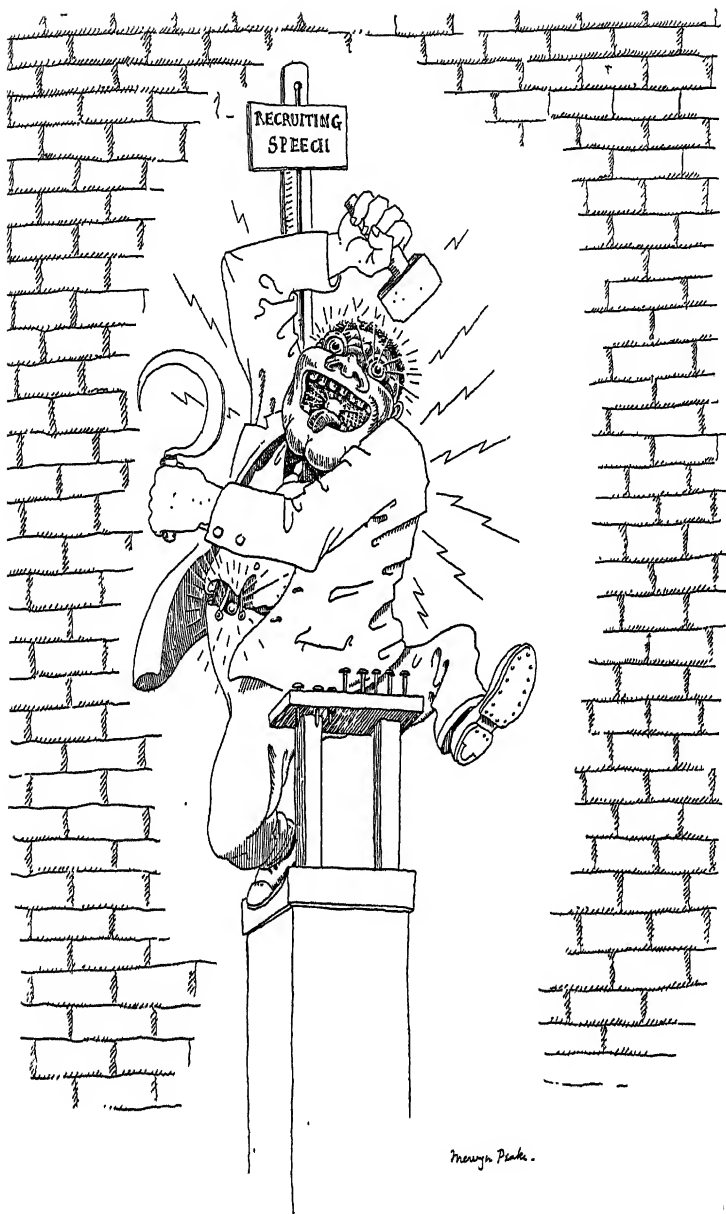
'Why won't they happen?' asked the Young Soldier.

'You seem to think of the world after the war,' said Mr. Ultra-red, 'as one in which all the heads will be hard and all the pillows soft. Well, it is not going to be at all like that. If the heads are hard, the pillows will be hard too.'

'Not at all,' said the Red-tape Worm. 'If the pillows are soft, the heads will be soft too.'

'Please explain yourselves, gentlemen,' said the Young Soldier.

Ping went a bell, and with a sweep of the sickle the Robot brought the notice board down and sent it up again bearing the



Merwyn Peake.

announcement 'First Principles'. 'The explanation,' said Mr. Ultra-red, 'is rooted in the inescapable logic of history. It can, therefore, be demonstrated with the exactness of a series of mathematical propositions. The difference is that instead of mathematical quantities, we have to deal with events which are the phases of a developing world revolution. They are necessary phases, and though they may be accelerated or retarded by human effort, they cannot in the long run be averted or even modified. I propose now to embark on the demonstration.'

'Go ahead,' said the Young Soldier.

'I have heard it all before and it is as stupid as it is stale,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'but please go ahead, if it will amuse our young friend.'

The Robot cleared his throat, glanced comprehensively and approvingly over the heads of the acquiescent Robots and began.

'First, at the end of the war, six million young people will be demobilized from the various Forces and thrown on to the labour market.

'Secondly, they will be in no mood to remain contentedly unemployed on the dole. Unless they get work, reasonably well-paid work and get it soon, there will be trouble.

'Thirdly, capitalism can never again give them work.'

'Why not?' asked the Young Soldier. 'I don't see how on earth you can make statements like that. Suppose, for example, that trade recovers?'

A red light flickered ominously over the Robot's face at the hint of opposition implied by the question.

'Please be so good as not to interrupt the demonstration,' he barked at the Young Soldier. 'I am just going to tell you why not.'

As he said this he brought his sickle round with one arm and crashed his hammer down with the other. 'First Principles' came rattling down and 'Contradictions of Capitalism' took its place.

'In every capitalist State', the Robot went on, 'the national income is divided in about the same proportions. Half goes to 10 per cent of the population, the privileged class, the other half to 90 per cent, the masses. Consequently, the masses have not the money with which to buy the goods which the world's productive machinery enables it to produce. As science advances, and as in con-

sequence machinery grows more powerful, so does the world's potential productive capacity.'

'Why only potential?' asked the Young Soldier.

'It's not realized, and it's not realized because of under-consumption. Under-consumption means that the would-be consumer is unable to buy the goods which the would-be producer is able to produce but unable to sell. Why is he unable to buy them? Because of the unequal distribution under capitalism of the world's income. As a result there are too many goods in a world which starves and grows cold for the lack of them; and because there *are* too many, artificial methods must be adopted to keep down the supply. Coffee is thrown into the sea, cotton is ploughed into the land, litters of piglets are deliberately slaughtered in order to keep up the price of bacon. . . . Do you know that during the twenty years between the wars the number of unemployed in our own country amounted to 15 per cent. of the employed population? During the whole of that time the community was underclothed, under-educated, under-housed and so under-nourished that, according to Sir John Orr, twenty-two million of us were living on a diet which was too meagre for us to enjoy perfect health. Yet the hands that could have been busy making the clothes to warm and growing the food to feed them were idle because there was nobody to set them to work.'

Again the sickle and hammer went to work and 'Paradox of Want in Plenty' took the place of 'Contradictions of Capitalism' 'It is here', the Robot went on, 'that you see the crowning folly of our system, the paradox of want in the midst of plenty. Because of it we have bowed down and worshipped not the man who can make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, but the man who could make one blade of grass grow where two grew before. Thus abundance becomes calamity. Because we have had neither the will nor the wisdom to distribute to all the bounty with which science has endowed us, each fresh showering of plenty from science's horn only throws our economic machine more completely out of gear. This situation must grow worse, for, as science advances, we shall be able to produce ever more goods with ever less labour. Since there are not enough purchasers, these goods will increasingly clog the channels of trade. The conclusion of my

“thirdly” is, then, that under the existing system, the workers will have no better chance after the war than they had before it of finding the work that they need. In fact, once the damage of the war has been made good, and this should take two or three years at the most—their chance will be less, since as the machines will have become more powerful, the crisis which they have precipitated will have grown more severe.

‘Fourthly, this crisis can be avoided only by a scientific economy.’

‘What is a scientific economy?’ asked the Young Soldier.

A regular peal of bells sounded as the simple and impressive inscription, ‘Soviet Russia’, ran, brightly illuminated, up the pole.

‘Russia has a scientific economy,’ said Mr. Ultra-red. ‘In Russia, the State is the only employer and every worker is, therefore, a State servant. How much he is to receive is determined for him by reference to a scale of salaries prescribed by the State, as it is determined in the case of our own Civil Servants. On what principles does the State determine the income of its employees? Every year the Economic Council meets and plans the economy of the country according to its knowledge of its resources. So much is allocated for education, so much for defence, so much for the social services and so much for the goods which men and women will need to consume—for food, for clothes, for housing, for amusement and so on. The amount which can be spared for consumers’ goods having been duly assessed, the State proceeds to coin or print currency which is roughly equivalent to that amount, so that there is just as much purchasing power in the community as there are goods to purchase. But only those who work receive pay and the gross inequalities of reward which disgrace this country do not occur. Thus, the productive machinery of the country produces only the goods that people as a whole want, and produces as many of them as people can pay for. Now the Russian system entails a State planned and controlled economy.

‘But, fifthly’—‘fifthly’ was introduced by the announcement ‘State Ownership of the Means of Production, Distribution and Exchange’—‘you can’t have a State planned and controlled economy, while the means of production, and, therefore, the decision as to what and how much shall be produced, are in private hands. For a State controlled economy involves the control of

prices and wages and labour; it also involves the abolition of dividends; it involves, in a word, that all the goods that industry produces shall be made available for the community as a whole, and that the profit accruing from the manufacture and exchange of these goods shall be distributed for the benefit of the community, instead of being skimmed off as it is now by the comparatively few rich owners and their parasites.

‘But’—and here a deep-toned bell sounded, the Robot’s voice took on a graver note, red lights flickered menacingly about the face while the pole exhibited the notice ‘Revolutionary Conflict’—‘sixthly, the owners will not give up their privileges without a fight. Who would? Though numbering only one-tenth of the population, they absorb one-half of its income. Thus their wealth enables them to command whatever in the way of power, privilege and enjoyment wealth can buy. It can buy them seats in Parliament. The Tory member pays for his seat by subscriptions to the Party funds and subventions to the Party organization in his constituency. Once established in Parliament, they proceed to make the laws, which, of course, are framed in their own favour. They set the standards of behaviour, just as their women set the fashions of taste. These standards and fashions are designed to support the whole structure of snobbery which is the mould in which English life is set and through whose crust the revolutionary impulse of the masses must force its way. For a generation they have corrupted the leaders thrown up by working-class unrest and suborned them to betray the workers who elected them, not openly by gifts of money, but by the influence of their superior manners which make the workers’ leaders feel clumsy and uncouth, and of their superior clothes which make their wives feel vulgar and ugly. They know the right people, the right restaurants, the right drinks and the right oaths. They are manifestly more competent and knowledgeable in the art of living. . . . They have used the influence which their superiority gives them without stint or scruple. They have so dined and wined the Transportouses, indulgently ridiculing rather than roughly gainsaying their convictions, that in the end they have succeeded in making them ashamed of their convictions. “These views of yours”, they seem to say, “are, of course, all very well as propaganda among the workers, but no sensible, experienced



man could possibly take them seriously, and now that *you* are a sensible and experienced man, we would not for a moment insult you by supposing that you take them seriously yourself." By such methods they have sapped the fibres of the workers' leaders and weakened their wills, causing them to hold all things of small account in comparison with being numbered among the select band of those who hold the keys of power. Having secured immunity for themselves by drawing the teeth and cutting the claws of the workers' leaders, how have they used the power which their security has conferred? They have shamelessly wasted the nation's substance to give themselves what they call a good time, spending as much on a single meal as would feed a worker's family for a week.'

'What rot that is. Money doesn't make you happy,' said the Young Soldier.

'Perhaps not,' said the Robot, 'but at least it enables you to be miserable in comfort.'

'I don't believe it.'

Again the red light flickered. 'Why should you? You've never been poor; if you had, you would realize that all the arguments which people bring forward to show that poverty is no evil show it, in fact, to be a very great evil. Nobody ever tries to convince you that you can be happy on £10,000 a year.

'But you are right in this, that the most important use of the power of money is not to give oneself a good time but to buy the command of all the avenues through which the public mind is formed—the press, the cinema, the theatre, the wireless and the agencies for advertisement. These are used with the deliberate object of persuading people that the best thing in the world is to be one of the wealthy governors, next to that, to be as like them as possible, and next to that, to be governed by them, that is to say, to be a citizen of what is called free, democratic England, whilst the worst thing is to give them trouble. Those who give them trouble they call agitators. I am an agitator,' said Mr. Ultra-red proudly. 'My "sixthly" insists, then, on the obvious truth that the possessing classes will not give up these privileges of theirs without fighting for them. Vote as you like, elect your majorities to represent you in Parliament, but once your Transportouses and Emas and Ames use their Parliamentary majority to do what they were

sent there to do, there will be trouble. An emergency will be declared, Parliament suspended and the country governed by decree. Those who protest will be given short shrift.

'It was Cromwell who once said "Vote it as you please; a company of poor fellows will spend their blood sooner than see it settled so". But these are not poor fellows but rich fellows and it is not their blood that they will need to spend so long as they command the weapons. For remember, the development of military technique during the last fifty years has concentrated power into ever fewer hands—the hands that drive the tank and fly the 'plane. The nineteenth century was the workers' century, the democratic century, for in the nineteenth century numbers counted. The workers manned the barricades with their rifles and guns and made revolutions, for there were only rifles and guns to bring against them. But riflemen cannot hold a barricade against tanks and bombs, as the Spanish war proved. The man in the tank or the aeroplane is worth a hundred, nay a thousand, without tanks or aeroplanes, and we know', added the Robot darkly, 'who is behind the man in the tank and the aeroplane. Seventhly'—and here, with a ringing of bells, the notice 'The Crisis of Capitalism' shot up the pole, 'we come to the choice, the choice that is now plainly presented to us, either increasing misery, if capitalism is allowed to continue, or hard fighting extended over many years—it was Lenin who said that the period of the revolution would be a whole epoch—if the capitalists are to be dispossessed. That is why I said that if the heads are hard, the pillows will be hard too. But in the end the workers will win. They must win, for the logic of history is on their side. As the contradictions of capitalism grow more acute, war will follow war, outbreaks of class conflict will grow ever more violent and frequent until in the end the workers expropriate the expropriators and take control of the government.' The notice 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' ran at this point up the pole. But not wanting to hear about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—indeed he had heard all about it often before—the Young Soldier decided to say a few words on his own account.

'I don't believe a word of it,' said the Young Soldier. 'We don't do such things in England. Our governors have always known when to make concessions in time. I'm sure, too, that Labour

would never want to push things to extremes. You may laugh at Mr. Transportouse to whom I was talking in the wood, but he struck me as a very decent sort of chap. He knew what he wanted and he was quite right to want it, but he was prepared to be reasonable about getting it. It seems to me you forget the political history of our country. Think of the genius which our leaders have shown in moments of crisis for transcending the interests of their particular class or section, and thinking of the community as a whole. Think of the political instinct that we have shown in a hundred crises of our history.'

The Robot seemed greatly agitated by the Young Soldier's remarks; the arms gesticulated, the feet shuffled and the features worked to the accompaniment of a continuous clanking of machinery. At the approving mention of Mr. Transportouse, a series of buzzers crackled like pistol shots all over the body, while the light behind the eyes flickered so continuously that the whole face was suffused by a red glow. The right arm swung round, the hammer knocked in a nail at a single blow and sent a new notice rocketing up the pole; it was entitled 'Lackeys and Lickspittles'.

'Bilge and balderdash!' said the Robot. 'You are either very foolish or very innocent. Do you suppose that that collection of timid and obese old men that lurks in the burrows of Transport House has the ability either to control or to arrest the advance of the revolutionary movement? Do you suggest that it has any influence at all? Do you suppose that it thinks at all except about how to keep its job, or that it has the will to make its thoughts effective, even if it had any? Do you know, for example, how old it is?'

'Well, I suppose some of the men at Transport House are a bit old,' said the Young Soldier.

'A bit old!' The scorn in the Robot's voice was immeasurable. 'If only you young fools would take the trouble to acquaint yourselves with a few facts. Now you listen to me. Of the 162 Labour members in Parliament, twenty are septuagenarians, two are octogenarians, over 40 per cent are over sixty, only one is under thirty. When a vacancy occurs it is automatically given to an ageing Trade Union official who has worked hard in the Trade Union movement all his life, is now past his work and looks for his reward

to an obese and long-drawn-out euthanasia in that home for aged hacks, the House of Commons.

‘What do such men know about revolutionary change? Why should they even desire change? They have done very well for themselves out of the capitalist system, and I don’t doubt that they are prepared to do the best they can for the workers they represent within the bounds of that system. And therefore they desire nothing better than that the system should continue. How zealously they labour that the capitalist board may be well spread, in order that they may get the credit for distributing to the workers the crumbs which fall from the capitalist table. Naturally possible to it that the crumbs are as rich and as numerous as possible. Transport House! What is the place but another vested interest in capitalism, a mere wag of the tail on the capitalist dog, which has turned the House of Commons into a casual ward for the Labour Party.

‘And who, I should like to know, *are* these aged sheep in sheep’s clothing? Whoever heard of them? Have *you* ever heard of them in the Army?’ he asked, turning on the Young Soldier.

‘What a silly question,’ said the Red-tape Worm, who had all the time been listening with a sneer on his face. ‘They have never heard of anything or anybody in the Army.’

‘Well, I must admit that we don’t talk politics much in the Army,’ said the Young Soldier. ‘That’s why I thought I would like to ask people who were more in the swim of things than we are about the world that they are planning for us after the war. But I am bound to say that with the exception of Mr. Ema and Miss Ame I have not heard anything very constructive yet,’ he added reproachfully.

Ping went the bell, and ‘Apathy of the Masses’ shot up the pole. ‘Of course you don’t discuss politics,’ said the Robot. ‘How could you? You don’t know anything about them. Why, you haven’t even got a vote. Seven years have we been without an election, which means that four out of every five of those who are now serving in His Majesty’s Forces have never had a chance of showing what their politics are. And then the Transportouses have the impudence to say *they* represent the masses! Why, nobody under forty has ever heard of them, and if they had heard of them, they would

give them short shrift, I can tell you. They would soon get rid of those elderly limpets, just as they did in Germany where the grey-beards of the Social Democratic party went on clinging to their seats in the Reichstag without so much as the ghost of a suspicion that the young had forgotten all about them, until the day came when Nazi shock troops, all of them under thirty, stormed the citadel and sent them packing. They learnt soon enough then what it means to ignore the masses.'

'I am not sure that I follow the drift of these remarks,' said the Young Soldier. 'Are not you rather wandering from the point?'

'Not at all,' said the Robot. 'The point is that these old, tired men are out of touch with the times, which means that they have neither the instinct to interpret change nor the will to guide it. When change comes, whether from the left or from the right, they will be swept aside. Meanwhile the real conflict lies elsewhere. It is, as I have told you, between the will to revolutionary change in the masses driven by the logic of events——'

'How', asked the Young Soldier, 'can they be at the same time politically apathetic and imbued by the will to revolutionary change?'

'Don't ask silly questions,' said the now purple-faced Robot. 'Between, as I was saying, the will to revolutionary change in the masses driven by the logic of events and the vested interests of the possessing classes who will fight for their privileges. You prated of the political instinct—"genius", I think you called it—of the ruling class. When have they ever shown it?' (Up went the notice, 'Predatory Imperialism'.) 'They have never scrupled to take what they wanted by force if need be, and to cling to it when they have got it. When their hold is threatened, they have not hesitated to fight in its defence with bayonet and bomb, with aeroplane and machine gun, with all the latest and most devilish instruments that they have bribed the scientist to make for them. With a Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other, they have developed the remotest parts of the earth in order to enlist the cheap labour of their inhabitants to pander to their needs and increase their profits. They have torn the heart and soul out of every native culture, and left only the muscles conscripted and the bodies chained in their service. In pursuit of their Imperialistic greeds they quarrel perpet-

ually with their fellow ruling classes in other States, and, once the issue is joined, their only method of showing that they are in the right is to kill off as many of the working class of the so-called enemy as they can. Look at the pass to which they have brought the world to-day. They have turned Europe into a concentration camp and a shambles. Is it not better at any cost to rid ourselves of these blind rulers that reck of nothing but their own profit and power, and to destroy the system that produced them and made them what they are, than to hate and to be hated, to kill and to be killed, and in a welter of slaughter to squander the bright heritage of the ages? Political instinct indeed! Political folly, political madness, political savagery, political suicide!' The Ultra-red Robot concluded his peroration in a whirl of activity, bells ringing and lights going on and off all over his body, arms sawing like the sails of a windmill and hammer and sickle alternately swinging in the frenzy of his gesticulation.

At the climax of this activity there was a whirring sound as of a spring running down, the lights went out, the bells stopped, the arms fell to the sides and the mouth remained open in mid-flow of oratory. The figure swayed, tottered and fell over with a crash.

All this time the Red-tape Worm had been looking on with an expression of tolerant amusement on his features. 'Dear, dear, what a lot of noise,' he said. 'He always will get so excited and then he exhausts himself and runs down.'

'I hope he has not run down for good,' said the Young Soldier, 'because I must say I found what he said rather impressive. I wish I didn't feel that it was so near the truth!'

'Don't you worry about that,' said the Red-tape Worm. 'He will get wound up again all right. The ground staff comes and overhauls him every night, inserts some fresh records and furbishes him up for another bout of talking next day. But I must say you surprise me. Near the truth! What an idea! Let me assure you that you are quite mistaken, if you think that *that* is the truth! Nothing, indeed, could be farther from it!' It was the Young Soldier's turn to be surprised.

'I thought you agreed with him,' he said. 'You laughed with him at Mr. Transportouse, and very uncomfortable, I can tell you, the pair of you made me with him guffawing away on one side and you

tittering on the other. Tee-hee, tee-hee,' cackled the Young Soldier, trying to reproduce the tittering of the Red-tape Worm. 'That is a nice sort of thing for a man to hear.' But it was not a very successful performance.

Successful or not, the Red-tape Worm did not seem to mind a bit. 'Don't mind me,' he said, 'I am the future, and I have the strength of the future which is that though you can laugh at it and though you can fight against it, you can't stop it happening. Besides, you know, you don't really laugh like me however much you try. Listen to this, for example.'

Hereupon the Red-tape Worm gave a special exhibition of cackling for the Young Soldier's benefit, clashing at the same time his pins and paper clips, rustling his ruff and emitting a perfect river of red ink which poured out of his mouth, down his scales and so in a little cascade on to the files which formed the face of the cliff. 'Now you can't do that, you know,' he said proudly. 'God did not make you that way.'

'Thank goodness He didn't,' said the Young Soldier. 'Who wants to go dribbling ink about all over the place, whenever he opens his mouth?'

'Ah, but you see this is symbolic ink,' said the Red-tape Worm. 'There is a parable in it.'

'What does it symbolize?' said the Young Soldier.

'It symbolizes the truth that words are of no value, unless they are translated into fact. Now to translate them into fact, you must first put them into minutes; the minutes in due course become memoranda, which after a period of incubation in files, mature and turn into government schemes and so at last achieve reality. Now to put words into minutes and memoranda you must have ink. By ink, then, is the word made flesh. All this is symbolized by the ink that floats the words that issue from my mouth. It is because the Ultra-red Robot's words will never come true that he has no ink.'

'Do all these files contain schemes?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Every one of them,' said the Red-tape Worm. 'Here, for example, is the file of the new Ministry of Embryonic Physiology'. Having no hands worth speaking of, the Red-tape Worm had to point with his tail. Whenever he wished to indicate a file, this shot out behind

him like a telescope, hovered for a moment in the air and then pounced down and wriggled itself lovingly round the file selected, which it proceeded to drag out into the front of the cave. The file of the Ministry of Embryonic Physiology bore the sub-title 'Proposals for the Treatment of Embryos in the Womb or Bottle'.

'What on earth does that mean?' asked the Young Soldier.

'I had better explain. I understand, by the way, that you want to know what the world after the war is going to be like. Well, I am going to tell you, not, mind you, what you would like it to be, which is what Mr. Transportouse and his foolish puppets told you; nor what the inescapable logic of history demands that it shall be like—the inescapable logic of history is only a myth of the Ultra-red Robot's—but what as a matter of scientific fact it *will* be. For the first thing you must get into your head is that it is going to be a scientifically planned world.'

'I am sorry to be stupid,' said the Young Soldier, 'but there is something here that I don't quite understand.'

'What is that?' asked the Red-tape Worm. 'You have only to tell me and I will explain it at once. I can explain anything to anybody.'

'What I don't understand is this talk about planning. At least, I don't understand it coming from *you*. I always thought that civil servants were passive creatures; that they did not propose schemes of their own but merely crabbed the schemes proposed by others. I have pictured them as keeping the administrative machine, such as it is, working pretty well—due to their being impartial, incorruptible and all that—but as being incapable of devising new machines and, because they were incapable, tinkering with the old one long after it had become manifestly obsolete. That is why—so I have always understood—they are no good at improvising in war time, and have to get in the business men to help them. It is only natural, then, that they should always have been down on the planners. How they have snubbed them and pigeon-holed them and kept them at arm's length. Why? Because planning means doing things; it means, therefore, controversy and struggle and the overcoming of vested interests, whereas I have heard that the prayer of all good civil servants is "Give peace in our time, O Lord". The civil servant then, as I have known him, is more planned against than



planning, which is why he provides himself with red tape and files, so that he can tie up other people's plans and bury them somewhere in that cliff of yours. And yet here are you—a pukka civil servant, if ever there was one—planning away like mad for the world after the war. I simply don't understand it.'

'As usual you are out of date,' replied the Red-tape Worm, 'in fact your conception of the civil servant is at least ten years behind



the times. It was, I suppose, early in the 1980's that it happened to us.'

'What happened?' asked the Young Soldier.

'We were fertilized by a school of plan-worms. Yes, you may well look surprised. I can assure you that nobody was more surprised than we were when they came after us'—the Red-tape Worm looked very coy as he said this (I know that the pronouns I am using indicate a different sex from the functions I am suggesting. But what would you? Red-tape Worms are of all sexes and none, and I am just about to contemplate this one in his female aspect) — 'but one fine morning there they were, a whole school of them

crawling down Whitehall, crawling up the steps of the offices, crawling into our rooms, crawling on to our desks, crawling. . . . But modesty forbids that I should follow their crawling further. Anyway, then and there union was consummated and from it there was born the Plan-y-tape Worm—it is a three-syllable word by the way, in case you want to use it. Plan-y-tape Worms have no independent existence, they subsist wholly in the being of their parents. In fact, one carries one's offspring about with one just inside one like the kangaroo, takes him out when he is wanted, and puts him back again.

'Now it is the Plan-y-tape Worms who whisper their secrets to the Red-tape Worms, inspire us with our ideals and reveal to us our visions of the world after the war. Would you like to see my own little offspring?'

This time the Young Soldier was less captious. 'Very much,' he said.

'Then watch me carefully,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'and I will bring him out.' Saying this the Red-tape Worm gave a series of convulsive wriggles. The body writhed and twisted, the lashing tail waved and beat the air and presently folded right over the body, folded underneath it and came out on the other side. The Red-tape Worm had tied himself into a knot.

'Now look carefully,' he said.

In the upper folds of the knot a stirring was perceptible—some process of fermentation was, it was obvious, going on below the surface—then a series of shudders agitated the skin, a tearing sound was heard as of silk being ripped, a smile of beatitude appeared on the Red-tape Worm's face, the tail waved, the knot came undone, the body straightened out and there, in the fold where the knot had been, was another little worm. It was both like the Red-tape Worm and unlike; like in shape, like in texture, like in countenance, but instead of being bound with red tape, the hinder parts of its body were covered with a kind of parchment scrawled over with characters. The front parts, instead of being armoured with pins and paper clips were diversified by a number of protuberances that stood out in rows all over the shoulders and the chest, or rather all over the place where the shoulders and the chest should have been. Peering closer, the Young Soldier recognized the keys of a typewriter, each with its appropriate letter. The Plan-y-tape Worm

was considerably smaller than its putative mother. So soon as it had achieved separate existence, it sidled rapidly along the length of the Red-tape Worm's body, so that its little face came up close behind the Red-tape Worm's ear. When the mouth was an inch or so away from the ear, it shot out a tongue, rather like the tongue of a lizard, the point of which disappeared into the ear of the Red-tape Worm. Not at any time did this strange being speak, but throughout the exposition that followed its tongue was continually shooting into and out of the Red-tape Worm's ear, as it prompted its mother with new designs, the typewriter keys jumping up and down frantically the while. The miraculous birth of the Plan-y-tape Worm having been accomplished, the Red-tape Worm resumed the theme of his discourse.

'Let me begin,' he said, 'by ridding your head of two silly delusions. The first is Ultra-red's nonsense about economics. Of course things have got to be planned after the war. That is where he is right. And equally of course, if things are properly managed, there won't be any conflict. That is where he is wrong. Management—that is what is required. Parliament must be managed, the Press must be managed, the currency must be managed, the children must be managed, the workers must be managed and, if necessary, the employers must be managed. For example, given proper management of production we can in a hundred years raise the standard of people's lives to between four and eight times what it is to-day; Lord Keynes himself has said it'—the Red-tape Worm's voice assumed a note of deference as he mentioned Keynes's name. 'Now if you multiply the amount of goods in the world by five times and give everybody a full belly and a nice house; if you make everybody comfortable, and, because comfortable, acquiescent, you put an end once and for all to what is called the social problem.'

'But who is going to do the managing,' asked the Young Soldier. 'It seems to me that everything depends on that.'

'I am, of course,' said the Red-tape Worm. It is impossible to convey in words to the reader, the satisfaction with which he said this, or the way in which he wriggled his coils and agitated his scales which, as they gently clashed together, made a noise like the crumbling of a dry biscuit or the swish of the skirts of two starchy old ladies sitting over their tea, or the viscosity of the saliva, thicker

and yellower than the ink, that oozed from his mouth, or the lashings of his elongated tail with which he whipped himself into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction. It is impossible, I say, to describe these things in words and so I have unearthed Mr. Peake to describe them for me in the picture you saw on page 66.

‘I say that I am,’ the Red-tape Worm repeated. ‘For the second of your delusions, my young friend, is that people want to manage things for themselves, or even want to interfere when they are managed by others; that, in a word, they care about politics. They don’t care two straws about politics. The political alertness and civic interest of the citizens of free democratic England is the biggest of the bees that buzzes in the empty, big head of Mr. Transportouse.’

‘But even if they are not very interested now, won’t they become so, when they get better educated?’ asked the Young Soldier.

‘Not a bit of it. Since they have been educated they have grown even less interested than they were before. When we’ve educated them a bit more and a bit better, they won’t be interested at all.’

‘You are talking in riddles,’ said the Young Soldier. ‘I should have said that the education of citizens is one of the pre-conditions of the successful working of democracy.’

‘Oh, you would, would you?’ said the Red-tape Worm. ‘Then how, pray, do you explain the fact that sixty years ago, when only one Englishman out of four could read, it paid the papers to print verbatim reports of Parliamentary Debates? Now, after sixty years of popular education, when everybody can read, it is generally quite impossible to tell from reading the so-called popular Press, whether Parliament is sitting or not. It does not *look* as if education had increased popular interest in the workings of democracy. And, by the way, how much interest do your mess-mates in the Army show in the policies and programmes and creeds and causes about which the politicians make such a fuss? How much, for example, in the prophecies of the Ultra-red Robot or the promises of Mr. Transportouse?’

‘Well, I must admit,’ said the Young Soldier, ‘that I made up my mind to ask the civilians about the better world after the war, because nobody in the Army seemed to know much about it.’

‘Or about politics either,’ said the Red-tape Worm. ‘Ultra-

red told you that most of the men in the Army have never had a vote. But, my dear chap, do you suppose that they would want to use it, if they had?’

‘Why shouldn’t they want to exercise their rights as citizens?’ asked the Young Soldier.

‘Well, partly, as I have suggested, because we’ve already begun the process of educating them; even more—though this is really a part of their education—because we have learnt how to keep them amused. Fifty years ago young working class lads took up politics because there wasn’t anything else for them to do, at least, there was only the pub to get tight in and the chapel in which to pray off the effects of getting tight in the pub. Well, you know, the beer doesn’t get any better and the prayers don’t get answered, so after a time these amusements began to pall and the bright young chap started going to meetings and making speeches for a change. The meetings occupied his mind, gave him a chance to hear his own voice, enabled him to meet his betters and perhaps to go up in the world. But now, just think of the things we have invented to keep him amused and out of mischief—the cinema, the radio, the gramophone, the dance hall, dirt-track racing, dog racing, the cheap car, the road-house, football pools, cross-words, all of them growths of the last fifty years—apart from which, we are still keeping his old friends, the music-hall and the football match, whippet racing and the pub, going full blast. And what is the result? Provided there are plenty of cinemas and dances to go to, young people are kept amused and contented and don’t give a damn for who governs them, or for the way in which they are governed. If you don’t believe me, I will give you Chapter and Verse for what I say. Excuse me a moment.’

The Red-tape Worm wriggled round and peered at the files behind him; the Plan-y-tape Worm, turning round at the same time, darted away in the direction of one of the files and pointed to it with his outstretched tongue. The Red-tape Worm’s tail shot out, waved for a moment in the air and then came to rest on the file indicated, round which it twined itself. He turned over its pages. ‘Yes, here we are,’ he said. ‘“Report on Pursuits, Avocations and Interests of Young Men between the Ages of Eighteen and Twenty-five, Carried Out in the Three Arcas of South Wales, Liverpool and

Glasgow in 1938." South Wales has always been one of the most politically conscious parts of the country. Now what percentage of these young men do you suppose are members of a political party? What would you guess now?'

'About half?' said the Young Soldier.

'1.8 per cent,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'and in Glasgow and Liverpool, the percentage was even lower. Not much interest in politics here! But bless you, that is only a beginning. With the aid of a little psychology, we can do much better than that. Of course, I can't give you all the details now, but just to show you the sort of thing, take this file.' Here the tail tapped the file of the Ministry of Embryonic Physiology upon which all this time the Red-tape Worm had been lovingly rubbing himself.

'Here', said the Red-tape Worm, 'you will find instructions for treating the embryo in the womb by suitable injections into the mother, or perhaps', he added reflectively, 'we might be able to devise a more satisfactory method by keeping the embryos in cold storage in bottles until we want them. The great advantage of bottles is that it is easier to get at the embryo with suitable diet, injections, diathermy and so on, than it is in the mother's body. According to the class of citizen wanted, so will the ingredients of the injection be compounded.

'Here, again, in this file which belongs to the Department of Psycho-analytic Training, are instructions for laying in early childhood the groundwork of the various complexes of which we propose to make use in later life—the Fear complex, the Envy complex, the feeling of Inferiority, the feeling of Guilt, and, what is more to the point, inferiority to *whom*, envy for *whom*, guilt for *what*. Very important point that! Here again are the files of the Department for the Conditioning of Reflexes. You know the sort of thing, of course?'

'Not exactly,' said the Young Soldier. 'I suppose you mean Pavlov and his dogs?'

'Pavlov's discoveries brought up to date and applied to the requirements of social science,' said the Red-tape Worm judicially.

'How do you mean?'

'Well, as a modern young man you ought to know without my telling you. But just to give you an example, here are a lot of young children, destined to be workers, machine minders and so

on; the robots, you know, of the scientific state, though we shouldn't, of course, call them that. They are lying in their little cribs in a ward of the State clinic. Now workers must not get ideas into their heads; they must not be fanciful or romantic; above all, they must not go whoring after beauty, or we shall have them mooning and idling over their work. Their day in the factory will seem to them dull and boring; they will be filled with restlessness and dissatisfaction and, when the Spring is in their blood, they will be itching to be "over the hills and far away". As the Red-tape Worm quoted this line, he permitted a seraphic look to appear for a moment on his otherwise impassive features. "'Over the hills and far away",' he repeated. 'Very pleasant and attractive—very pleasant and attractive indeed—but it won't do, you know. So we've got to condition them against beauty and romance. Now what is the germ of the sense of beauty in the very young, what the impulse from which romance springs? Jolly, exciting, brightly coloured toys and the emotions which the very young feel for them? Right again! What do we do? A trolley covered with trays of the most attractive-looking toys imaginable is wheeled into the ward. All the little baby hands are stretched out to grasp the toys (the clutching reflex). Just at that moment the most ear-splitting sirens you ever heard—no, a dozen of the most ear-splitting sirens you ever heard—are let off simultaneously. Now one of the unconditioned stimuli for fear in the very young is a loud and unexpected noise. Inevitably, then, the babies recoil in terror. Every day for a week the toys are presented and the sirens sound. Then one day the toys are presented alone, and not a baby stirs a hand. On the contrary they cower away in terror. A conditioned reflex has been established, as a result of which they now react to the toys in the manner appropriate to the sirens. What follows? When they grow up they will react to the grown-up version of the toys, to beauty, to romance and the longings which they evoke, with the same emotions of fear and repulsion, as they now feel for the toys. Properly conditioned, the workers will go uninterruptedly about their—that is to say our—business.

'Or here again is a class of little boys destined to be soldiers. Now soldiers must not fear death. Right! We prepare a hospital ward full of old people about to die. Indeed, we will suppose them to be

in the very act of dying. By the bedside of each dying man is a tray covered with whatever in the way of sweets little boys most delight in. The little boys are let into the ward just as the death rattle is sounding in the old people's throats. But do the little boys care about the death rattle? They do not. They are busily munching the sweets. Presently we show them the dying men without the sweets, and their only response is greedily popping eyes and abundantly salivating mouths. Good again! When they grow up, they will not fear death, since they will have learnt to associate it with pleasurable sensations and an army of highly courageous soldiers will be happy to kill and die for the State. I do hope you see the importance of all this.' The Young Soldier was shocked.

'So you are going to make men into automata,' he said, 'to take away their manhood and destroy their souls? And what, pray, is the point of it all? To what end do you do these things?'

'To the end of an efficiently organized and properly run community, whose citizens do their duty happily and cheerfully in that condition of life to which it shall please the various departments of State to call them.

'You will understand, of course, that I have not recounted to you a tithe of the devices which we have in preparation to achieve this noble end. There is the whole question of education, for instance . . .' Here the tail lovingly caressed an inordinately fat file entitled Ministry of Mind Formation.

'Stop!' said the Young Soldier fiercely. 'I can't stand any more of this.'

The Red-tape Worm was affronted. He arched his neck, clicked his scales, darted out his tongue and made a hissing noise. The little Plan-y-tape Worm meanwhile manifested every symptom of alarm. Convulsive shudders passed down its body, rustling the parchment and jumbling the lines of writing; at the same time the typewriter keys jumped madly up and down. At the climax of this activity the Plan-y-tape Worm wriggled itself round, sidled rapidly along the length of the Red-tape Worm's body and, coming to the spot from which it had emerged, rubbed itself to and fro against the Red-tape Worm's abdomen. Something seemed to give, a gap opened in the skin and quick as lightning the Plan-y-tape Worm disappeared inside it.



‘Now look what you have done,’ said the Red-tape Worm resentfully. ‘You have sent our bright young planner back to the darkness in which his schemes were hatched; and I don’t wonder either—such rudeness, when we were both doing our best to explain things to you, is really unpardonable. And so unnecessary too. What on earth, if I may be permitted to drop into the vernacular, is biting you? I was just about to explain to you why, if the pillows were soft the heads must be soft too, which, as you may remember, is a question that you yourself asked me. That is why I was going to tell you about our proposals for education. But if you would rather not hear about them, do let me beg of you to remember that the whole training of our citizens is inspired by one aim—to make them happy. Every pleasure that the appetite of man can desire, every amusement that his wit can devise, will be at their disposal. You know how people enjoy the cinema, but at the cinema they only hear and see. What of cinemas at which they can feel as well, feel the smooth flesh of the lovely creatures upon whom they so longingly feast their eyes? Yet that is precisely what we have in store for them. Just as the movies developed into the talkies, so the talkies under our management will develop into the “feelies”.

‘That is a truly beautiful idea, is it not? But you must not give me all the credit for it,’ added the Red-tape Worm modestly. ‘In common with some of the other devices I have mentioned, it has been suggested by the most advanced thinkers of our times. We always do our best to keep abreast of advanced thought,’ he added, ‘but the defect of the ideas of advanced thinkers is that they usually remain ideas. It is my business, in collaboration, of course, with the Plan-y-tape Worm—I think I told you this, didn’t I?—to translate these ideas into fact. And not only ideas but ideals; I, in fact, am the great realizer of ideals.

‘Hence the “feelies”, one of the most potent realizers of the ideal of government-induced contentment. Researches for the perfection of this beneficent device are already under way and are fully dealt with in the file of the Ministry of Public Anaesthesia. I have it here at my side.

‘I may say that we are hoping ultimately to rope in the sense of smell, although it is not, as yet, clear to me that the “smellies”

would be a wholly desirable experiment,' added the Red-tape Worm reflectively.

'The last thing I should want to do is to smell film stars,' said the Young Soldier. 'In fact, I think it is a disgusting thought.'

'Well, probably you are right,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'although I have always thought that there is a great field for the development of the olfactory arts.'

'But I would not have you think it is only through the delights of the senses that we propose to guide and govern our citizens. There are also their minds. I have told you of our proposals for conditioning and psycho-analysing them. I should have liked to have discoursed to you about their education. Indeed, I was just going to do so when you showed those regrettable, may I be permitted to describe them as those ill-mannered, signs of restiveness? But I do hope that you will stay quiet, while I add a word on our proposals for direct mind inspection and control. They are as novel as they are important, and I am sure they will interest you.'

'As you know, our scientists have demonstrated that consciousness is only a by-product of bodily processes, like the bright colours you will see on an oil film when the sun strikes it, or the phosphorescent glow that you can see round a decayed lobster in the dark—a good image that, don't you think?' said the Red-tape Worm, squirming with self-satisfaction. 'The mind, in fact, is nothing but the smoke shadow thrown off by the body-machine, as its cranks and connecting rods move backwards and forwards. Control the machine, and you control the mind which reflects it. Now what we are proposing to do is to control the machine. How, did you ask?'—although the Young Soldier had said nothing—'By wireless, of course.'

'Upon every child at a suitable age a trifling and, I am told, painless operation will be performed. A small piece of the skull will be removed, and in the opening there will be inserted a radio set very delicately fashioned of the best ivory. This set which will electrically record the vibrations of the brain to which it is attached will be tuned in to the Ministry of Mind Control. To the officials of that Ministry it will continually transmit the thoughts of every citizen, whose mind will be open to their inspection whenever they like to tune in to the radio set that he carries in his head.'

The consternation of the Young Soldier at this suggestion was obvious.

'Don't worry,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'people's minds won't be *always* under observation. Most of them, after all, won't concern us, and we estimate that we can't afford more than about one official to every twenty citizens. It is only on important occasions that the officials of the Ministry will listen in.

'Moreover there are, of course, as you will realize, two sides to this. If the mind of a citizen is unregulated, if he harbours discontent, if, in short, his thoughts are anti-social—though in view of his previous training this contingency may be regarded as highly improbable—we shall regulate them. We shall, that is to say, communicate to him improved thoughts. If he resists our communication—and I suppose,' added the Red-tape Worm reflectively, 'it is just possible that a residue of what old-fashioned moralists used to call Free Will may persist in exceptionally strong-minded individuals—we shall jam his mind. This will be so extremely painful, like the worst headache that you can imagine raised to the *n*th degree of intensity, that it will be quite impossible for him to go on thinking anti-socially.'

'But surely,' the Young Soldier proceeded, 'you have no right to interfere with people's minds in that way?'

'I am sorry,' replied the Red-tape Worm, 'to distress you by referring to this necessary instrument of scientific government, but let me assure you that it *is* necessary. And frankly I don't understand your talk about "right". Throughout history the masses have always been governed by the dominant few with varying degrees of inefficiency. It is right that it should be so, since ninety-nine people out of a hundred are made by nature to obey. They don't know how to control themselves and inevitably they must have masters. They don't even want to think for themselves; they only ask to be told what to think and what to do, which, incidentally, is why the Church and the Army have always been their two most popular institutions. What they want and always have wanted is security, and, provided they behave themselves and obey their rulers, security is what we are prepared to give them. The difference between the government I propose and other governments is not in degree of control, but in the degree of efficiency with which the

control is exercised. Ours will be the first efficient government, and since contented peoples are at once the condition and the index of good government, we shall see to it that our people are happy. You protest against the cerebral radio because it prevents free thinking; it also prevents people from being free to be miserable, or morbid, or lonely, or ill-disposed.

‘Now please be so good as to look at the other side of the picture. Think of the advantages of this beneficent invention. Consider how direct, and, need I say, how helpful will be its influence on the minds of our people. Let a man be low or depressed or miserable—not that that sort of thing is easy to imagine in the scientific state of the future—and we will send him cheerful, happy and invigorating thoughts. He will think of lovely girls with rounded limbs and satin skins, whom he will see and feel on the films that very night; he will enjoy the sensations of drunkenness and yet remain sober enough to enjoy them; he shall dream of going to heaven, or, if this will make him happy—for who are we, after all,’ said the Red-tape Worm modestly, ‘to prescribe the lines upon which his happiness shall come to him?—he shall sniff the odours of bacon and eggs or steak and onions, and even enjoy the sensations of eating them.

‘Here, in short, in the files of the Ministry of Mind Control, is the answer to the problems which all the philosophers and all the priests have sought unsuccessfully to solve. The philosophers praise the happiness that is within as the only happiness worth having, but they have never told us how to achieve it. We guarantee to import happiness from without. “Pray to God,” says the priest, “and he will vouchsafe to you assistance when you are in distress.” But He does not. How persistently He does not! What an ever absent help in time of trouble the deity was, by the way! But you have only got to communicate a single distressed thought to us—and you won’t be able to help doing this because of the broadcasting station in your brain—and immediately it will be wiped away, as if it had never been. In a twinkling, happiness will be restored.

‘Ah, what a happy England that will be,’ said the Red-tape Worm rhapsodically, ‘with its dirt tracks and dog tracks, its cinemas, its week-end cottages, its country clubs, its gramophones, its little flight planes—they will go vertically up, you know, and

come vertically down, dropping without noise or fuss on to whatever roof the pilot selects—and I may add that all roofs will be flat—its feelies, its smellies, its multitudinous games and sports. . . . Whatever land is not required for cultivation will be covered with a net-work of golf-courses, football fields, tennis courts, racing tracks, motor roads and bathing pools. A few specimen villages will no doubt be left, complete with preserved rustics who, on receipt of suitable emoluments, will give exhibition ploughings on their own fields with specially donated mother-of-pearl, or perhaps ivory, ploughs. Citizens will be able to photograph them performing this interesting, antique operation at all times since the fields will, of course, be illuminated at night by Neon lighting. The roads will be covered with a single, solid mass of metal stretching from Land's End to John O'Groats, as the ever growing number of cars comes gradually to rest in an inextricable jam. The coasts will be ringed with a continuous series of resorts at which jazz bands will discourse negroid music to tired sportsmen and their well-nourished wives. Wives, I should add, there will still be, though love, of course, will be free, aphrodisiacs and contraceptives being supplied gratis by the Government. A deluge of news and advertisement warranted not to arouse comment and carefully chewed so as not to excite thought will descend upon the heads of the community in a flood of continuous wireless and television. No place will be silent and no man lonely, the skies . . .'

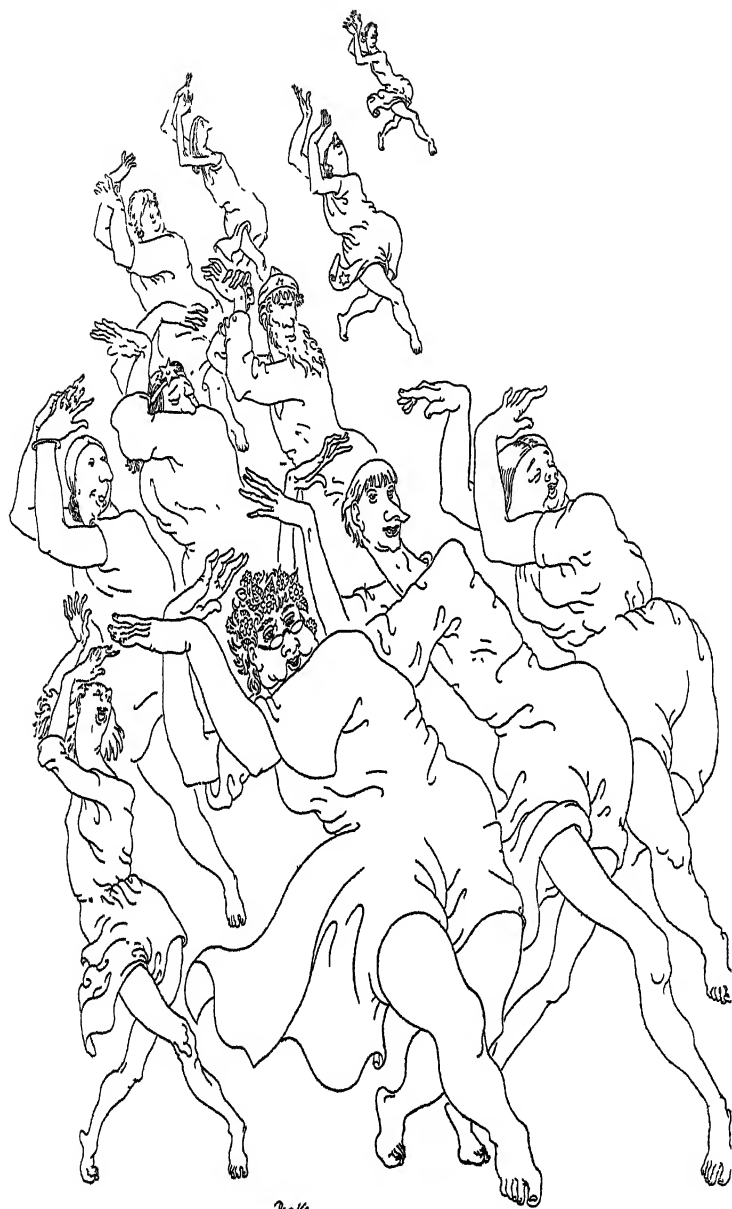
But at this point the Young Soldier was sick.

'What on earth is the matter?' said the Red-tape Worm. 'Aren't you enjoying yourself? Aren't you inspired and exalted by this vision of man's happy future? You asked to be told about the better world after the war, and I paint for you a picture of a people before whose organized and secure content the most extravagantly coloured dreams of the Utopiasts pale into insignificance. Don't you like it?'

'I think it so awful,' said the Young Soldier, 'that I cannot bear to hear another thing about it.'

'But what is the matter with it, my good sir?'

'Well, I suppose they will be comfortable, they may even, for all I know, be contented. But since they will be nothing else but comfortable and contented, their comfort is stifling and their content-



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ment nauseating. In fact, it was that that made me sick. Your horrible world almost persuades me that I don't want comfort at all. I want poetry! I want romance! I want danger! I want freedom! I want discipline! I even want hardship rather than that, and I want all these things with a part of myself that you have forgotten



—the soul. That's it, you have forgotten that man has a soul.'

'Not at all, not at all,' said the Red-tape Worm, 'every provision will be made for the soul. Theosophy, Christian Science, Occultism, Rosicrucianism, Spiritualism, Anthroposophy, above all Astrology will be officially encouraged. Never has there been such rich and varied dietary for the soul, as will be provided by the scientifically-run State which we are preparing for after the war. Already,' said the Red-tape Worm—and as he said this a rapt, prophetic look came into his eyes—'I can see long lines of middle-aged ladies following Great White Masters into the desert.'

Whether it was the rhapsodic quality of the Red-tape Worm's voice, or the lowering effect of his conversation, or the way in which he wriggled the pins on his spine, or the quantity of red ink

that kept pouring from his mouth, or the formidable effect of the massed government files which, looming ever larger and closer, seemed to be closing in on him, or whether it was the effect of all these things on top of the experiences he had already been through, the Young Soldier felt his head beginning to swim. A mist fell upon



his eyes through which he saw, or seemed to see, the face of the cliff split open. The files which a moment ago were threatening to overwhelm him fell away on either side, the strains of music were heard and through the opening a number of figures could be seen approaching. As they drew near, the Young Soldier saw, or thought he saw—for all this part of his experience was confused in retrospect, as if a veil had been drawn before his eyes—that these were the head of a procession composed of persons dressed in flowing robes who marched up to and past him four abreast, to the strains of martial music. The leading ranks wheeled round and came to a halt behind; the succeeding ranks divided, flowed round him and took up positions on either side, while the rearguard drew up in front. Thus the Young Soldier found himself in the centre of a



hollow square the four sides of which were composed of two rows of figures. On each of the three sides of the square a banner was held aloft and on the fourth side two banners. The banners were inscribed with lettering; on the right Christian Science, on the left Astrology; behind was the banner of the Oxford Group and in front, side by side, those of Theosophy and Spiritualism. Most of the figures wore white robes which were covered with many and various devices.



On the robes of the Christian Scientists doctors could be seen with their bowler hats and black bags in flight before elderly women of saintly countenances, whose hands were uplifted in benediction and prayer over childish sufferers lying in dimity cots; other figures were throwing gleaming instruments of surgery out of windows and pouring the contents of medicine bottles down sinks and into pails. The Oxford Groupers also wore white robes; their devices depicted gentlemen climbing up the masts of ships and attaching to their tops various soiled garments, among which shirts and pants could be distinguished; there were groups of people sitting in circles in the middle of whom young gentlemen on their knees with tears

streaming down their faces were making confessions; there were also rows of machines suggestive of the workings of a laundry. 'Surely', said the Young Soldier to himself, 'that can't be a mangle.' But a mangle it was and worn in the very centre of the chest.

The Astrologers were distinguished by purple robes upon which appeared the heavenly constellations and the signs of the Zodiac. Lions, fishes and virgins followed one another in cabalistic circles.

The robes of the Theosophists were also coloured; in fact they displayed all the gorgeous colours of the East. Prominent among their emblems was a great eye which, full of wisdom, opened mildly on the universe. Grouped round the eye at appropriate distances saintly men with turbans obviously of the Guru type were engaged in the processes of meditation and recollection. Round the tops of the robes ran a frieze in which old men and babies linked hands, symbolizing the chain of births and re-births; round their hems was another frieze featuring the more health-giving and unappetizing types of vegetable, the parsnip, the artichoke, the cabbage; but not, alas, the asparagus or the pea. Against a white background the robes of the Spiritualists were suffused with a rosy blush; this emanated from red lights which faintly illuminated sitters grouped in circles round tables. Upon the tables were writing tablets and trumpets, while suspended in the air above the heads of the sitters appeared child and angel faces, featuring every expression of innocence and saintliness known to the painters of ecclesiastical pictures.

When the assembled groups were all in place, the music changed and began to play a familiar tune. What was it? Why, of course, the tune of the Grand Inquisitor's Song from *The Gondoliers*. At a signal from an unseen choirmaster the whole gathering lifted up its voice and sang:

*'With confident airs,  
We hawk our wares—  
Each richly coloured label.  
We bid all sinners, "Repent! Rejoice!"  
But since we speak in conflicting voice,  
You pay your money and take your choice  
From this religious Babel.*

*'Who'll buy? Who'll buy?  
Is ever our cry,  
And always our endeavour  
Is casting out all manner of doubt,  
All possible, probable shadow of doubt,  
All possible doubt whatever.'*

The chorus finished, the others fell silent and the Christian Scientists sang:

*'To those in pain  
We gladly explain  
Our mode of restoration,  
Where other healers have tried and missed  
We cure each tumour and boil and cyst  
Simply by proving they don't exist!—  
If that's a consolation.*

*'The public weal  
By touches that heal  
Is always our endeavour:  
Of that there is no manner of doubt,  
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,  
No possible doubt whatever.'*

Next came the Oxford Groupers:

*'We think it best  
To get off our chest  
All hurtful sex repression,  
And where some others would stand aghast,  
Soiled linen we nail to the highest mast,  
So if you are blessed with a dirty past  
Let's have your frank confession!*

*'And you'll be wise  
To soliloquize  
And all restraints to sever:  
Of that, there is no manner of doubt, etc.'*

These were followed by the Astrologers:

*'By means akin  
To an aspirin  
We cure your mental ailing,  
By keen researches in astral lore  
(Based on the works of the Elder Moore)  
We can dispense from our starry store  
A recipe unfailing.*

*'We bring you ease  
For moderate fees,  
The whole thing's frightfully clever:  
Of that there is no manner of doubt, etc.'*

The Theosophists were next:

*'Our spiral creed  
Will scarcely need  
A long elaboration,  
And if you grasp at this unique chance,  
Blavatsky will give an approving glance  
And higher and higher you'll soon advance  
With each reincarnation.*

*'So you must grant  
That Mrs. Besant  
Was shrewd as well as clever,  
To leave us with no manner of doubt, etc.'*

Finally, sang the Spiritualists:

*'Our methods provide  
A vista wide  
Of spectral exploration,  
And if from Above or from Below  
Post-mortem news you wish to know  
Of Auntie Fanny or Uncle Joe,  
We make an assignation.*

*'The rest is told  
By spirits controlled,  
Who faithfully endeavour  
To cancel out all manner of doubt, etc.'*

When the Spiritualists had finished, the whole gathering broke again into the chorus:

*'Who'll buy? Who'll buy?  
Is ever our cry,  
And always our endeavour  
Is casting out all manner of doubt,  
All possible, probable shadow of doubt,  
All possible doubt whatever.'*

As the final sounds of the chorus faded away, the company broke ranks and dispersed through the wood, or reclined in unbecoming attitudes on the sward.

So far nothing has been said of the sex of the singers; this is because the Young Soldier had considerable difficulty in determining it. Were they men or women? He peered doubtfully at those lying nearest to him, but then, he reminded himself, whenever you wonder whether it is a man or a woman you can always be sure that it is a woman, and these, he decided—yes, even these—are females, albeit in the highest degree unattractive females.

Even as he distastefully gazed, music was heard again, the recumbent figures leapt to their feet, and some of them began to dance. Upon their bare feet the dancers wore sandals and as their variegated robes bellied out into the breeze, the Young Soldier recognized the emblems of the Theosophists. The music was that of a well-known popular song of the last war which the Young Soldier remembered to have heard in his childhood, and as they turned and twisted the dancers sang:

*'I'm Karma, the charmer  
Of Annie Besant,  
The plagiarist of Plato,  
Destroyer of Kant.  
Spinoza  
Is low, sir,  
But minds devout and glum  
Find Karma, the charmer,  
Their sanatorium.'*

'Beautiful, isn't it?' said a voice at the Young Soldier's side. He looked round and there at his elbow sat the Red-

tape Worm, wriggling with pleasure, a rapt look upon his features.

‘Now, listen’, he said, ‘to the Christian Scientists.’

This time the dance was more sedate, in fact a stately minuet was being footed. But the tune was that of no eighteenth-century composer, but of a well-known Scottish song, and the dancers were not lords and ladies but Christian Scientists. As they bowed and curtsied to one another, the Scientists sang:

*‘If a body, anybody, ’gins to go awry,  
Tell that body, evil body, pain is all “my eye”,  
Mrs. Eddy, Mary Eddy,  
Gives the message true,  
It isn’t really pain you’re feeling, and it isn’t  
really you!’*

Another group, clad in gorgeous colours, rose to its feet. The music struck up a familiar air, as the Astrologers began to circle in the mazes of a country dance. Round and round they thumped holding hands, setting to partners, forming squares and circles while the odour of perspiration rose upon the air. The dance, I say, was a country dance, but the tune was the tune of a hymn and the words they sang were:

*‘All things wise and wonderful  
That Nature holds in thrall  
Esoteric, mystical  
We hold the key to all.*

*‘On idealistic principles  
And strict commercial lines  
Our Science shall make plain to all  
The planetary designs.*

*The readers of the Sunday press  
Shall learn the things they seek  
And from our grateful prophecies  
Draw comfort all the week.’*

As the dancers jigged and circled their beards waggled, for these indubitably were men.

The voice of the Red-tape Worm was heard again. 'And now', he said, 'the Groupers.'

The strains of 'After the Ball is Over' were heard and a number of—yes, this time, too, they were men—began to chant:

*'After the war is over  
What are we going to do?  
God will tell us the answer  
But you bet that he won't tell you.  
So hadn't you better join us,  
Tell us your sins—don't be shy?  
You will never discover how bad you are now  
Nor how good you'll be then—till you try.'*

'The Spiritualists,' announced the Red-tape Worm.

Another white-robed group rose to its feet. This time it was again to a hymn tune that they danced and sang:

*'Have your loved ones passed away?  
Crossed the Great Dividing Line?  
You shall hear their voices say  
That they are well and doing fine.  
  
'Tables turn in dread surprise  
Spirit voices fill the brain.  
Ectoplasmic visions rise  
See! The loved ones back again.'*

As the Spiritualists finished their song, the five groups joined hands and circling round the Young Soldier broke into chorus:

*'Oh, you ain't got no God, no more,' they sang.  
'No, you ain't got no God, no more,  
But we are the pill  
Of a world that is ill  
Since it ain't got no God, no more.'*

But the endurance of the Young Soldier was at an end. Anything to dispel these awful visions. He rubbed his eyes, jumped to his feet and shouting horribly rushed upon the nearest dancers. As a Commando officer who had just taken part in exercises, he still had

his Commando knife hanging from his waist. This he drew from its sheath intending bloody murder, but as he ran forward the dancers began to fade. By the time he had reached the magic circle in which they had danced and sung, the whole throng had disappeared.

There was only the Red-tape Worm lashing his tail, licking his scales and tee-heeing away in his high-pitched cackle, whilst the accustomed stream of red ink cascaded from his mouth.

The Young Soldier turned on him. 'You,' he said, 'who have conjured up these figments; you shall not live to make them real, for I know now that you are the devil in modern guise, and this nightmare world that you have planned is the devil's world. Well, it shall never be if I can stop it.'

Saying these words, he rushed at the Red-tape Worm and cut off his head with his knife. The body continued to writhe, but with a series of flashing strokes he divided it into half a dozen segments. And then was seen a horrible thing, for each segment grew a separate head and a separate tail and its own spine of pins and its own armour of paper clips and all together they began tee-heeing and dribbling streams of ink.

Holding his hand before his eyes to shut out the sight, the Young Soldier dropped his knife and ran madly from the place, up the asphalt road, past the factory, quiet now, past the cliff of files and so into the wood again. He threw himself down on the ground and for a time lapsed into unconsciousness.

The next thing he heard was a voice saying, 'You are quite right. The Red-tape Worm really had forgotten the soul.'

The Young Soldier was lying on his back with his head on the roots of a large oak. At the sound of the voice he got up, rubbed his eyes, shook himself and looked round for the speaker. He could see nobody.

'And you know,' the Voice went on, 'you can't permanently forget the soul. That is the real sin against the Holy Ghost, the sin that has brought the world to its present state.' The voice which was high pitched but clear and athletic in articulation seemed to come from the stump of a tree some four yards away from where the Young Soldier was lying. He searched the grove carefully, but, as far as he could see, there was nobody there.

'Who are you?' he asked, 'and where are you?'



'My name is Mr. Heardhux,' answered the Voice, 'and I am sitting on the tree stump just in front of you. But I'm afraid you can't see me, because just now I am in my astral body.'

'What on earth is that?' asked the Young Soldier.

'It is a kind of aura that surrounds the physical body. In most people the spiritual sense is sealed by the bodily senses, so that they can't perceive anything but the grossly material; *ergo*, they can't perceive astral bodies. But if you follow the prescribed regimen, control your breathing, attend to your posture and especially your sitting posture, live on vegetables and cultivate the arts of meditation and recollection, the eye of the spirit will be opened and you will be able to see the things of the spirit; *ergo*, you will perceive the astral body.'

'What does it look like?' asked the Young Soldier.

'It looks like a sort of halo, a variously coloured glow surrounding the physical body. According to your temperament, so is it coloured. To be able to see the astral body you must place your foot upon the lowest rung of the ladder of initiation; ascend the ladder and you will be able not only to see the astral bodies of others, but to live in your own astral body, discarding, even if only for a time, the gross envelope of flesh with which it is invested. I myself have reached that stage. I am at present pure spirit without desire, though presently I shall have to resume the physical body and know again the desires of the flesh.'

'But what are you speaking with,' asked the Young Soldier, 'a physical voice or an astral voice? It seems to me ordinary enough.'

'A good question,' said the Voice. 'The voice with which I am speaking to you is my ordinary physical voice. If it weren't, it could not set going those waves in the atmosphere which are now impinging on your ear-drums. But what, after all, is a voice?'

'Part of the body, I suppose,' said the Young Soldier.

'Not exactly. Certainly not part of the body in the sense in which the arms and the legs are parts of the body. What we call a voice is the effect produced by the vibration of certain chords in the larynx when a current of air from the lungs passes between them, as a breeze will set the telegraph wires humming. The sound effects produced by the vibrations are controlled by the tongue, soft palate,



teeth and lips. When one is in the astral body and desires to make contact with the material world, one resumes just as much of one's physical body as is necessary for the purpose. If I wanted to lift something, I should resume my arms; if I wanted to kick something, I should produce a foot . . .'

'But surely when you are enjoying the spiritual life of the astral body, you could not conceivably want to kick anything,' said the Young Soldier.

'Well, I suppose not. It was only an example, and, as I see now, a bad one. Similarly, if I want to speak to somebody, I resume my throat, laryngeal chords, soft palate, teeth and lips. In fact, if you look very carefully, you can see them.'

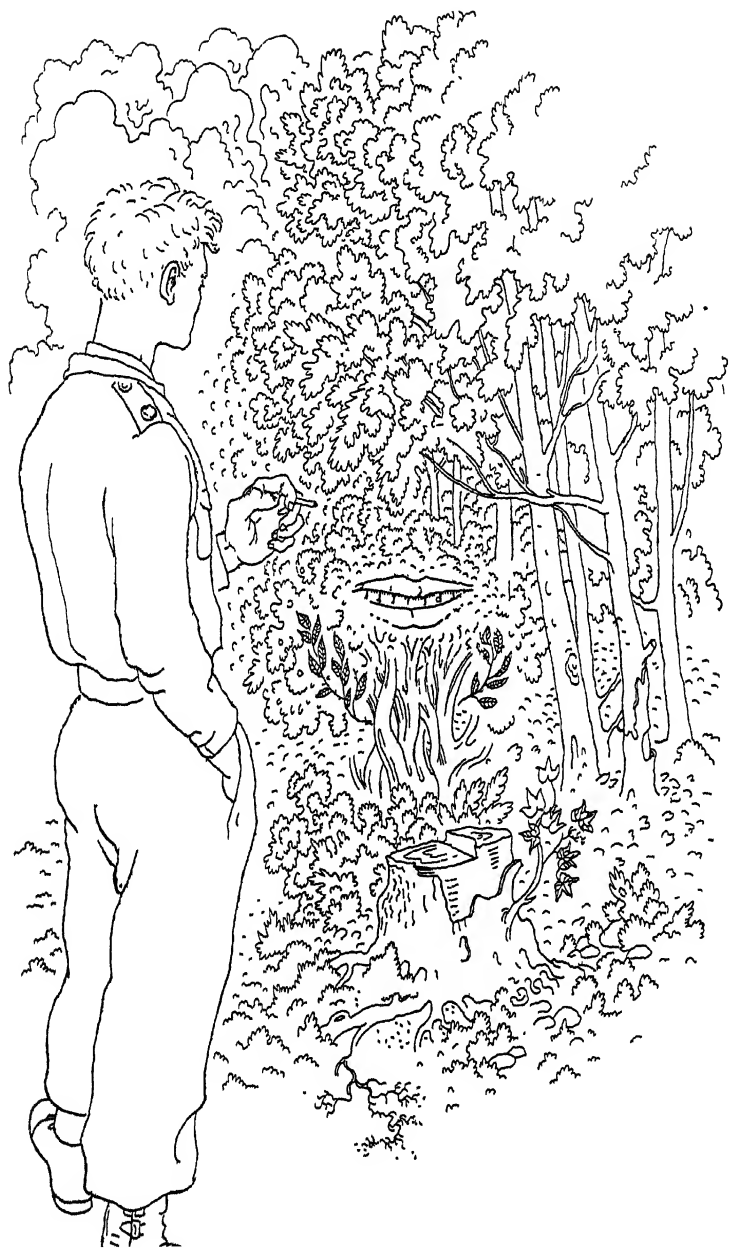
The Young Soldier peered into the grove in the direction of the tree stump and saw, or thought he saw, a couple of lips and two rows of teeth, one of which had a gold stopping and also some indeterminate objects, which for all he knew to the contrary—for he did not really know what such things *ought* to look like—might have been a soft palate and a row of laryngeal chords. They did not look very nice, so he did not inspect them too closely.

'But didn't you say,' he asked, 'that you needed lungs to produce the current of air that sets the laryngeal chords vibrating? I don't see your lungs. And don't you want a heart to pump blood into the lungs? I don't see your heart. And don't you . . . ?'

'Now you are being inquisitive,' said the Voice. 'It should be sufficient for you that I am in the astral body and am resuming my talking apparatus, and *only* my talking apparatus, in order to talk to you. I may say that I have also got a pair of bodily eyes, so that, though you can't see me, I can see you. I add, that, if you were prepared to emancipate yourself from earthly desires you, too, could enlarge your consciousness and live intermittently a spiritual life in your spiritual body.'

The Young Soldier was impressed. He was not sure that he wanted to be a spirit himself, but he did think, as almost everybody does, that a disembodied spirit must be wiser and better than an embodied one.

'You, if anybody,' he said, 'should be able to give me that which I seek, a picture of the better world which is to follow the war.'



'I can't do that,' said the Voice, 'because the world after the war will not be better.'

'Not better?' said the Young Soldier. 'Then for what do we fight?'

'Men fight because of their wickedness. But do you answer this,' said the Voice. 'How can there be an improved world with unimproved human beings?'

'But we shall improve human beings. We shall improve them by teaching them, by legislation, by planning for them a better environment and a saner world. We are going to build a new Britain after the war. Surely you have heard about it?'

'And the legislators, the teachers, the planners? Are *they*, then, to be improved, that they should legislate, teach and plan better than they did before?'

'I don't understand,' said the Young Soldier.

'Well, you yourself said in criticism of the Red-tape Worm's world that he had left out the soul. But hasn't our world left it out too? It has developed the mind. By the aid of science it has conquered nature and in consequence it has endowed man with unprecedented powers. With what result? Our civilization stands on the verge of destruction through our inability to control the powers with which science has so embarrassingly endowed us. For, you know, you can't just leave the spirit alone and forget about it. You can't leave anything alone. To leave it alone is to leave it to a torrent of change. Leave a white post alone and it will soon be a black post; leave the spirit of man alone and, presently, he will be no more a man but a Red-tape Worm, a Robot, an Escapegoat or a Devil.'

'But surely,' said the Young Soldier, thinking of Mr. Ema and Miss Ame, 'science has given us the tools to make a world in which the level of comfort and health and beauty—not to speak of man's opportunities for knowledge and culture—will put the greatest of man's past achievements in the shade. What is more, the benefits of this world will be enjoyed not merely by the few but by all?'

'Agreed that we have the tools to make such a world; the power, I grant you, is there. But what if the power is misused? It is like doubling at Bridge. The greater their powers, the greater the good, and also the greater the harm, that men can do with them. We, on

the whole, have chosen to do harm. That is why the advance of science has been accompanied by the retrogression of man.'

'Suppose that you are right. How is man to be improved so that he may use his powers for good?'

'By rediscovering and attending to the one thing he has forgotten, the soul.'

'There you are again,' said the Young Soldier, 'always the soul. But what about Christianity? What about the Church? Doesn't that make provision for the soul?'

'How long since you went to Church?' asked Mr. Heardhux.

'I can't remember,' said the Young Soldier, 'but it was a long time ago.'

'Anybody else go to Church that you know?'

'I can't say they do,' said the Young Soldier, 'that is, of course, in civvy life. In the Army they have to go.'

'What fools they are!' grumbled the Voice. 'If anything were wanted to give the Church its *coup de grâce*, compulsory Church parades would do the trick. But you have answered your own questions, "What about the Church? What about Christianity?" There they are, zealously playing the old game on the old ground; but nobody pays any attention to them. Forgive me for using what may seem to you an inappropriate metaphor, but when I am in the flesh, I am a frequent visitor at Lord's. The Church goes on bowling away—it has been bowling for twenty years—but the public simply isn't batting. It isn't even watching.'

As Mr. Heardhux said these words, there appeared from among the trees at the head of the glade the figure of a clergyman complete with dog collar, gaiters and clerical vest. He was singing and behind him there came another clergyman also singing and behind him yet another. Gloomily and with measured tread the procession of reverend singers walked across the glade, a sight at once impressive and depressing. The Young Soldier strained his ears to hear the words of their song or rather dirge. This is what he heard:

*'We've tried them with yorkers, we've tried them with lobs,  
We've spread our new modernist matting,  
We've tried them with sermons, revivals and sobs,  
But the public, it seems, isn't batting.'*



*'We've tried them with incense, we've tried them with buns,  
We've sung them in English and Latin,  
We've put them in first and given them runs,  
But the public, alas, isn't batting.'*

As the last clergyman disappeared among the trees, 'You see!' said Mr. Heardhux, 'We have forgotten them, utterly forgotten them and they don't like it.'

'Well, what if we have?' said the Young Soldier. 'Have they got the recipe for making a better world? Of course they haven't. Or rather, we have tried it and it is no good. Look at the time Christianity has been in the world, nearly 2,000 years, and then look at the world.'

'Look at the time there has been water in the world,' said Mr. Heardhux, 'two million years at least, and then look at the state of your neck.'

The Young Soldier, who was particular about his appearance, blushed. 'I have had rather a tough time,' he said, 'what with running after Captain Nick, listening to Mr. Ultra-red and cutting up the Red-tape Worm—you wouldn't think how full of smuts the air was round the factory; and there was all that dust from the files. And then, I expect, I got a bit dirty lying on the ground under those trees.'

'Exactly,' said the Voice, 'you have been contending with the powers of this world and you are soiled. But you won't take the way out of these difficulties and conflicts which has been open to you all along.'

'What is that?' asked the Young Soldier.

'The way of the spirit.'

'Please, what is the way of the spirit?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Has it come to this, that I must tell you?' exclaimed the Voice in dramatic dismay. 'But, first, I'd like to know if you accept my diagnosis of the contemporary situation, which is that having been presented by science with powers fit for the Gods, we no more know how to use them than a pack of schoolboys or savages. We know how to fly in the air like birds and to swim in the sea like fishes but how to walk upon the earth we still don't know. To what ends do we direct our powers? To accumulating material objects and obtaining control over other human beings. By what motives are



we animated? By greed and pride and love of power, by ambition and acquisitiveness. By what standards do we value our lives? By the standards of money-making and power acquiring. To what activities do we devote our leisure? To over-eating and over-drinking, to the satisfaction of our sexual appetites and to rapidly altering the position in space of pieces of matter including our own bodies. In literature and art we alternate between an admiration of gangsters and thugs, and an imbecile abandonment to the blandishments of crooners and mooners. Is it not clear that if we are to make a better world, we must become different creatures, animated by different motives, acknowledging different standards, engaging in different activities and, above all, aspiring to different ends?’

‘So what?’ said the Young Soldier.

‘Well, what about some spiritual ends for a change? Aren’t they a little overdue?’

‘I don’t understand,’ said the Young Soldier.

‘Well, you believe in evolution, don’t you?’

‘Yes, I suppose so.’

‘Through how many phases would you say that it has passed?’

‘One?’

‘No, two, both of them physical. During the first phase the process of evolution went forward inside the body of the evolving creature. Creatures grew progressively larger and more complicated, provided themselves with more organs, larger limbs, a better circulatory system, more formidable protective covering and so on. Presently a dead end was reached, the dead end of too much body, too many limbs, and too abundant tissues without enough brain capacity to direct them—in fact, the mesozoic reptiles. If evolution was to continue, it must, it was obvious, continue on some other plane than that of increase of bodily size. And so presently we get man. Now what is the distinguishing feature of man?’

‘The brain?’ asked the Young Soldier, tentatively.

‘The brain and what he does with it.’

‘And what does he do with it?’

‘He proceeds to make limbs outside his body. In other words, he makes tools which, biologically regarded, are simply the limbs which we have made outside ourselves to supplement our original physical inheritance. Presently the tools become glorified, become

in fact machines, become cranes and lifts to do the work of arms, trains and cars to take the place of legs and telephones to extend the range of our voices; in course of time we begin to delegate the functions of living to these external limbs of ours. We invent gramophones to save us the trouble of playing and singing and radios to save us the trouble of talking and thinking. But what, meanwhile, has happened?’

‘What *has* happened?’ asked the Young Soldier, a little bewildered by all this.

‘Why, at the end of this, the second phase of evolution, we are doing just what the mesozoic reptiles did at the end of the first; in other words, we are overdoing it. They grew so much bodily tissue inside themselves, tissue which they could not manage and did not know what to do with, that they were first embarrassed and in the end crushed by the unwieldiness of their own bodies. They had not the brains to manage their enormous bulk. Similarly we have made so many limbs outside ourselves that we do not know what to do with *them*. The machines, in fact, are growing too much for us. Already they are embarrassing and in the end they will overwhelm us, just as the bodies of the mesozoic reptiles overwhelmed them. Hence the paradox of want in the midst of plenty—the machines produce far more than we have the wisdom to know how to distribute; hence the scourge of war—the machines equip us with instruments of destruction which we are too mischievous to be able to control; hence, finally, the spiritual bankruptcy of an age in which machines provide with the means to the good life a species which misuses or fails to use them because of its ignorance of ends. That way the Red-tape Worm’s world lies. In fact, I don’t mind confessing to you that I suggested a number of its more repulsive features myself in the days when I thought you could frighten people into sense by showing them where their follies were leading them. But so wedded were the fools to their folly that they immediately supposed that, having conceived and described the Red-tape Worm’s world, it was the kind of world I admired.’

‘And didn’t you admire it?’ asked the Young Soldier anxiously.

‘Of course not. I was writing a cautionary tale for a generation which had forgotten the ends of life in its childish absorption in means.’

'But', said the Young Soldier, 'nobody has ever told me what the ends of life are.'

'Quite so, they have not. And that is why your generation, while possessing the means to the good life, has not the faintest notion of what the good life is. Look, for example, at the idol you have made of speed. Consider how you are obsessed with the idea of time saving. But to what end? Having moved heaven and earth to save five minutes, you haven't the faintest idea what to do with them when you have saved them.'

'Come—that is a bit thick, isn't it?' said the Young Soldier. 'I have always had heaps to do.'

'You may be an exception; you may even read, though I doubt it. Reading has already become a comparatively lost art.'

The Young Soldier was about to protest at this, but it is not easy to stop somebody talking when you cannot see them. The Voice went on remorselessly: 'What was the typical spectacle of English and American civilization just before the war? The young man and his girl driving along the roads in a high-powered car at sixty miles an hour, a danger to themselves and a nuisance to everybody else, straining to screw an extra mile an hour out of the old bus, in order that they might do what?—arrive a few minutes earlier at the imbecile roadhouse or country club at which they were proposing to have their tasteless dinner. And how did they employ those minutes that they had striven to wrest from the grasp of time? In telling another dubious story, in swallowing another synthetic drink or in listlessly turning over the pages of some Society picture paper showing persons of no distinction engaged in avocations of no importance—you remember the sort of thing: "Colonel X and Mrs. Y enjoying a talk at the — Point to Point Races". You remember, no doubt, the imbecile grins on the vacuous faces.' The Voice paused for breath. The Young Soldier, who was beginning to wonder whither these rather ill-natured remarks were tending, seized the opportunity to bring Mr. Heardhux back to the point.

'I am afraid you are allowing your early talent for satire to run away with you,' he said. 'I thought you had said good-bye to all that and were now trying to love people as brothers instead of rating them as fools. And what about the evolutionary process, anyway?'

‘I am just coming to that. Let us go back a bit and see where we got to. Evolution has got to go on—that is the first point. It can’t go on in the animals, they have all reached dead ends; therefore, if it goes on at all, it must go on in man—that is the second point. It can’t go on in man’s body, that is to say by the multiplication and elaboration of limbs and tissues, and it can’t go on outside man’s body, that is to say by the multiplication of tools and machines, because, as I have pointed out, it has already passed through those phases and come to the end of them—that is the third point. Therefore—and here we come to the fourth point—if it is to go on at all, it must go on—now where would *you* say it must go on?’

The Young Soldier, finding himself challenged, was momentarily at a loss. Then he remembered that the ‘soul’ had been the key word which had, so to speak, touched the Voice off; so, feeling very much like the bright little boy who produces the right answer in class, he came out pat with, ‘In man’s soul, of course’.

‘Good! I had hoped that the conclusion was inescapable, and I am glad to see that you cannot escape it. But let us use a non-committal word and talk for the moment not of the soul, but of consciousness. Evolution must advance on the plane of consciousness, if it is to advance at all. We must look, then, for a new evolutionary development, what is called a “mutation” which will take the form of an enlargement and intensification of consciousness.’

‘I see,’ said the Young Soldier. ‘But what does an enlarged and intensified consciousness do?’

‘It is more extensively and intensively aware.’

‘Aware of what?’

‘Now you are asking,’ said Mr. Heardhux, ‘and I don’t think that I can answer you without delivering a lecture on mystical theology, which I doubt whether you are ready to receive.’

The Young Soldier was nettled. He had an enquiring mind; he had always been told that he had a talent for asking questions and now that he had succeeded in asking the right question, it was being intimated to him that he could not understand the answer. ‘Couldn’t you tell me very simply?’ he asked. ‘Putting it in words of one syllable and short-circuiting it, you know.’

'I will try if you wish. Let me begin with another question. Who are the human beings in whom the power of consciousness has been most intensely developed?'

'The writers and poets?'

'No.'

'The scientists?'

'God forbid.'

'The artists, perhaps?'

'No, but you are getting warmer now.'

'The philosophers?'

'No, although now you are getting very warm.'

'I've got it,' said the Young Soldier, 'the religious mystics.'

'Right! In the religious mystics; those who, as they themselves tell us, have known and talked with God. And what has their enlarged and more intensive consciousness discovered?'

'God, I suppose,' said the Young Soldier.

'You suppose wrong,' said the Voice. 'It is only when they try to describe what they find that they talk of God, partly because they have no words with which to make plain the content of their vision and partly because it is only when they talk of a personality that we can understand them. You see, our imaginations are so incurably earthbound, so limited by the plane of unreality, that we have no images in terms of which to conceive reality. And so the mystics talk of God and our limited imaginations think of a very good and extremely powerful man. I sometimes think', added the Voice reflectively, 'that those of us who have known reality would have done better to keep silence. If one has experienced the unutterable, it might be better not to try and utter it.'

'Well, if it is not God that they know, what is it?' asked the Young Soldier impatiently.

'A universal, spiritual consciousness which is the underlying unity of reality. Please note that it is *not* a personal consciousness, though it unites and binds together all the apparently separate persons and things which make up the universe. But it does more than unite them, it expresses itself in them. Indeed it *is* them, or rather, it is the most real part of them; it constitutes, in fact, their true being.'

'Then it is our true being too,' said the Young Soldier.

‘Quite so, it is our true being, our real self; which is overlaid by the things of this world and hidden from us by the clouds of emotional dust raised by our passions and desires, but which is nevertheless the only part of us that matters, the only part of us that is real, and since it is beyond time, the only part of us that is immortal.’

‘But if that is so, then in knowing reality, we also know our true selves?’

‘Right again! And to know our true selves is to know reality. In fact, it is more than that, it is to *be* reality, for the knowledge of the spirit is not like ordinary knowledge. In ordinary knowledge the mind stands outside of and contemplates what is known; when I know a table, I am not the table. But in the realm of the spirit, to know is to merge with, to become one with what is known, as two lovers in the deepest experience of love become united with one another in spirit as well as in body and are, for so long as the experience lasts, a sacramental unity.

‘You will see, then, that the awareness of a heightened consciousness does two things. First, it knows reality, and in so doing knows the true self. Secondly, it becomes one with the self that it knows and so one with reality. One might, in fact, drop the “knowing” metaphor altogether, and say that in becoming the true self, we transcend the gulf of separateness that now cuts us off from reality and become one with the universal spiritual consciousness of which the true self is an expression. *That* is the true end of man.’

‘Golly!’ said the Young Soldier. ‘Is it really? Well, it’s nice to know’, and this he said not as one doubting, but as being too overwhelmed by what he had heard to be capable of any more intelligent interjection. For a moment he was, as he put it to himself, intellectually knocked out. But only for a moment, at the end of that time his inquisitiveness reasserted itself and out the questions came tumbling.

‘But supposing it is all true,’ he said. ‘What has it got to do with the world after the war?’

‘This much, that, if civilization collapses, as it well may, it doesn’t really matter as much as you might think. In fact, in the context of reality it matters very little. The terrestrial plane is only one of the lower reaches of the universe of the spirit; it is inhabited by unrealities, separated by the gulf between consciousness and the

unconscious from their true selves. The evil that is so prominent a feature of this world is one of the results of the separation, but evil does not belong to reality and probably represents a passing phase in the history of the cosmos as a whole.'

'It seems real enough to me,' said the Young Soldier, 'and *I* seem real enough to me. But are you so sure that civilization is going to collapse and is there nothing to be done about it?'

'No, I am not sure. What I have said is that it will collapse, unless human beings become wiser and better, wise enough and virtuous enough to use the tremendous powers with which science has endowed them without destroying themselves. Therein, surely, lies our danger. Look at the difficulty civilization has had in assimilating the internal combustion engine, in the invention of which historians of the future may well see the greatest single disaster of human history. What convulsions it has caused among the nations! How it has added to the horrors of war! How nearly it has brought us to the very verge of destruction! But science is not going to stop at the invention of the internal combustion engine. In fifty years' time it will have learnt to harness the tides; it may even have released the forces locked up in the atom. What terrifying powers such developments will put into the hands of the savages and schoolboys who now govern the nations. Do you really believe that they can control those powers so long as they remain savages and schoolboys?'

'The question is, then, how can they be emancipated from their schoolboyishness and their savagery? How, in fact, can they be made wiser and better?'

'Now, for my part, I don't think that you can make people better and wiser by passing Acts of Parliament or changing their environment. Any durable change must come from within. Men have got to cease to desire the things that make for competition and rivalry and separation of person from person and nation from nation, such as power and money and possessions, and to desire the things that make for unity and love. In other words, as I have told you, there has to be a change in human consciousness.'

'That's a tall order,' said the Young Soldier. 'If we have to wait for that, we may have to wait until the cows come home. And meanwhile, if you are right, the whole bag of tricks may go "phut".'

'That, if you will remember, is precisely what in slightly less inelegant language I have just been saying. But there is hope. We are, after all, conscious, which means that for the first time we can deliberately work for the further changes in consciousness which, if I am right, are impending. Hitherto evolution has been an unconscious process. The mystic who, as men put it, knew God, was after all only a "sport"; he turned up, as it were, accidentally. But we can consciously work for the mutation which will enlarge our spiritual powers. Indeed, it is our duty to do so. So my recipe for the world after the war is the cultivation of the spirit by recollection, meditation, fasting, breathing exercises and prayer in preparation for the coming of the newly-conscious man.'

'Sounds a bit arid and lonely to me,' said the Young Soldier.

'One is never lonely with God,' said the Voice sententiously, 'but I don't suggest that men should worship alone but in communities.'

'Oh, I see! You are going to found monasteries and go into retreats,' said the Young Soldier.

'Yes, if you must use old-fashioned language. After all, it is reasonable, isn't it, when a house is falling down, to get out of it; reasonable, then, when our civilization is breaking up, to withdraw from it, if one can? This isn't the first time that a wave of barbarism has flowed over the world and it isn't the first time that civilized men who cared for the things of the mind and the life of the spirit have looked round for islands of retreat above the flood. There are good historical precedents. The early Christians did it when the Roman Empire broke up, and founded the various monastic orders: their purpose was to serve and to worship God, to relieve suffering, as and when they found it, and, it may be, to keep alive something of the old culture. Similar causes subsequently produced similar movements, in the Middle Ages for example, and again in the seventeenth century, when the horrors of the Thirty Years War drove men and women into monasteries and convents. Always in times of the breaking of civilizations there have been those who have withdrawn from the *mêlée* to build, if they could, a bridge between the old and the new, or rather to hold aloft the torch of the spirit, until such time as the bridge could be built. But this time it is no mere transition from one civilization to another that is involved, for man, as I have said, cannot advance any further



along his present line. But equally he can't stand still. He must continue to evolve or disappear. The next step on his evolutionary path is, as I have shown, an enlargement of consciousness through mutation. It is, then, in effect nothing less than a new species of man whose coming we await. Hence the communities that we are hoping to see founded after the war—indeed, the work is already in hand—must be well and wisely founded, seeing that they may have to endure for a long time before the new man appears to whom they can hand on the torch.'

'They must indeed,' murmured the Young Soldier incredulously; but Mr. Heardhux apparently did not hear him.

'It may be that the tyrannies which men will establish in the years ahead of us will be more searching than any that have been known in the past. The new governments may aspire to control the minds as well as the bodies of men.'

The Young Soldier thought of the Red-tape Worm's cranial radio sets and wondered what would happen to Mr. Heardhux and his communities under the Red-tape Worm's benevolently paternal government. But probably, he reflected, Mr. Heardhux would retire altogether into his astral body.

'If civilization really does break up,' the Voice went on, 'there may be an era of local rulers—small gangster leaders whose writ will run over limited areas. Against such men our communities may be hard put to it to defend themselves. They must, of course, in any event be self-supporting, and the fact that they have food when, owing to the breakdown of the social services, people are starving, will make them an obvious temptation to the plunderer.'

'And what would your communities *do*?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Their task, as I conceive it, will be threefold. First, to prepare the way for the coming of the new level of consciousness and the new man in whom it is manifested. Man can transcend himself only by his own efforts, and it would be our task so to discipline and to cultivate the spirit that we may prepare the way for and even accelerate the new development. We should be, then, its fore-runners. Secondly, we should seek to know reality in our own persons. We have a duty to ourselves as well as to mankind, even if, in the long run, the two duties are the same. For the spirit of which

we are all expressions is one and the same, and in sharpening the eye of the spirit so that we come to know the reality by which we are sustained and united, we shall also be preparing for the emergence of that reality at a higher level of consciousness in others. We shall, then, by the practice of the techniques of meditation and recollection, seek to know reality.'

'What are those?' said the Young Soldier.

'I cannot stop to tell you now. There was a time when all educated men would have known what I meant. In the East these techniques still survive, but in the West the end of life has been forgotten in our preoccupation with the means of living. The good, in fact, has been smothered under the preparations that we have made to reach it, so that we are like athletes whose whole life is a training for a race that is never run. Nevertheless, the techniques whereby man may come to know his true self are remembered and still practised, and in our communities we shall cultivate them. Indeed, it is by their practice that, as I have told you, I have myself achieved temporary emancipation from the physical body. Thirdly, we shall, so far as we are able, build the bridge between the civilization that has been and that which is to come. If no mutation occurs, if no new species arises to take the burden from our shoulders, we shall keep alive the flame of the human spirit as long as we can, testifying in the days of darkness that are to come upon the earth that there is something greater than the wealth and the power which men now desire, some way of escape from the horrors and the misery and the cruelty which attend upon their desire's satisfaction. That "something" is the spirit of man, the beauty he has created, the knowledge that he has garnered, the truth that he has discovered and the good that he does; for these things are imperishable.'

'Very fine!' said the Young Soldier. 'But if civilization collapses and you with it and the new enlarged-consciousness man doesn't turn up in time—what then?'

'Then, I suppose, the expression of reality in the consciousnesses of individual human beings, in the beauty that they make, the good that they do, and the truth that they know, will cease. But only for a time; for all these things, as I have told you, belong to the world of appearance; but reality, which is of the spirit, is eternal.'

Presently the spirit will express itself in a new form, and a species will arise in whom the gulf which in us separates reality from appearance will disappear and the true self be fully realized.'

'But why on earth,' asked the Young Soldier, 'should the universal spirit take the trouble to manifest itself at all? As far as I can see, you begin with reality, a universal spirit, which is not only completely real but, I suppose, is very good. It goes out of its way to manifest itself in partially real beings, who, to put it mildly, are not very good, in order that if all goes for the best they can discover and make contact with their true selves and so achieve reality again. I am blest if I can see the point of it all. Especially as things may not go for the best, but for the worst, as I can't help thinking they are doing now.'

'I don't see the point of it either!'

It was another voice that answered and this time the speaker was plain, in fact, very plain. He was a small gentleman in late middle age, somewhat protuberant equatorially, with bright eyes, red lips and a short grey beard, who strolled into the glade with his hands in his pockets.

'I am so glad you don't,' said the Young Soldier. 'But who are you?'

'I am a philosopher who has a reputation for answering questions.'

'Then perhaps you will answer one for me,' said the Young Soldier. 'I want to know what the better world after the war is going to be like, and how we are to get it. I'd also like to know', he added, remembering Mr. Heardhux's denunciation of this world, 'whether life is a good thing.'

'Is life a good thing?' the Philosopher repeated reflectively. 'Well, you know, it all depends upon the liver.'

'If you are going to make foul puns,' said the Young Soldier, 'I shall go back to the mess. In fact, I was just going anyway when I met you. So if the subject bores you, please say so and I will go away. But I did so hope that you might be able to tell me a little about the world after the war. Won't you?' added the Young Soldier pleadingly. 'Won't you tell me what *you* think it will be like?'

'Sorry, but I couldn't possibly answer that question,' said the Philosopher. 'You see my reputation is quite fictitious. But there



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are lots of people who can, and I am sure they will be only too ready to oblige.'

'Yes, I know,' said the Young Soldier, 'I have been listening to them.'

'And what did they say?'

The Young Soldier, glad of an opportunity of talking for a change, told the Philosopher about Mr. Escapegoat and the Reverend Mr. Hateman, of Mr. Transportouse and Mr. Ema and Miss Ame, of the Ultra-red Robot, and the Red-tape Worm and of the Voice of Mr. Heardhux.

'Golly, what a collection,' said the Philosopher. 'And what do you think of them all?'

'I don't know,' said the Young Soldier. 'A lot of it sounded dreadfully like nonsense to me and some of it—what the Red-tape Worm said, for instance—rather horrible nonsense. Personally, I thought that Mr. Transportouse and his friends were the only ones who talked much sense.'

'I am inclined to agree with you,' said the Philosopher. 'In fact, from what you tell me I should have said they are most of them, with the possible exception of Transportouse, pretty wide of the mark, so I shouldn't pay much attention to them, if I were you.'

'But, you know, they sounded at times horribly convincing.'

'No doubt; but just think of the mistakes they made.'

'Did they? What mistakes?'

'Well, the first is the mistake of excessiveness—what I call the "all or none" fallacy. The second is the mistake of dogmatism, that is to say, pretending to know something that you can't possibly know.'

'I daresay,' said the Young Soldier, 'but won't you explain a bit?'

'By the mistake of excessiveness—I mean their grandiosity. How confident and sweeping and wholesale they all were! "Civilization is going to collapse". "Civilization can only be saved by a mutation of the spirit." "Men must become super men." "The community must be run by a scientific government." "Free will must be blotted out and men must be turned into machines." "Civilization is heading for revolution and civil war, and nothing we can do can avert revolution and civil war." Also, "Civilization can only be saved

by the victory of the proletariat" and so on. . . . Well, you know, it isn't as simple as that, or rather it is not as simple as any of that. What is more, whatever happens, it won't happen just like that. For my part, I simply can't think of the future in terms of these simple oppositions.'

'What do you mean by simple oppositions?' asked the Young Soldier.

'There is, for example, the opposition between change from without and change from within. The Ultra-reds, the Red-tape Worms, even, I am afraid, the Transportouses, think that you can wholly alter men by legislation. You pass Acts of Parliament, you give them better houses, educate them, insert radio sets into their heads, abolish private ownership, and so on. Mr. Heardhux, on the other hand, thinks that environment does not matter and that people can be changed only from within. You can't have improved societies with unimproved people, he says. Well, it seems to me that stated like that, stated, that is to say, as exclusive alternatives, both views are wrong. Do you ever read the Bible?'

'I haven't for longer than I can remember,' said the Young Soldier.

'Or go to Church?'

'Not for longer than that.'

'That's a pity because there is a well-known theological controversy that seems to me to illustrate what I call the "all or none" fallacy, and I would have liked to be able to refer to it.'

'Tell me about it, won't you?'

'The controversy is as to whether a man should be saved by faith or by works. Those who maintained salvation by faith said in effect that this world is unimportant, so unimportant that it does not matter much what happens in it. Therefore, it does not matter much what you do in it, provided that you repent in the end and believe in God Almighty and Jesus Christ His Son, as prescribed by Christian doctrine. In other words, provided that a correct relationship is achieved and maintained towards the divine Personages proclaimed by the Articles of the Christian faith, salvation is assured. Those who believed in salvation by works maintained that what was important was that a man should do good works, should live, in fact, a good life here and now, and, provided he did that, it

did not much matter what he believed. Now both parties could produce perfectly good backing for their claims, but they made the mistake of maintaining an exclusive either/or—*either* by faith shall a man be saved, they said, *or* by works. Now it seems to me that both faith and works are obviously necessary.'

'But what is faith?' asked the Young Soldier.

'Faith', said the Philosopher, 'is what makes some people say they believe what they know is not so.'

'Please be serious,' said the Young Soldier. 'If that is all faith is, then obviously it is not worth talking about.'

'All right! Only I feel rather foolish talking about faith, as I haven't got any, or not much; so let us begin with works; they are easier. It is, I should say, obviously wrong to despise this life. If you believe in any kind of purpose in things at all, it seems reasonable to suppose that we are sent into this world *for* a purpose. Anyway we might just as well try to make the best of it, even if we are not. After all, we *are* here, here whether we like it or not, pitchforked into life without so much as a "by your leave", and, therefore, as I say, we might as well make the best of it. "Making the best of it" means developing all one's faculties, faculties of the body *and* of the mind *and* of the spirit, living out to the full capacity of one's nature and realizing all that one has it in one to be. In a word it means living your life at concert pitch. Living your life at concert pitch means being prepared to experiment. You must be willing to try all things, to taste any drink once, to sow your wild oats in youth and hope that they will prove nutritious in middle age. It also means not specializing. It is not good enough to be a bespectacled scholar, a hearty athlete, a graminivorous ascetic or a battener on beauty. You must be something of all of these if you would make the best of life and get the most out of it, and not exclusively any of them. Getting the most out of it you will, of course, enjoy it. In fact, I am inclined to think that the one end of life about which we can be quite certain is its enjoyment, provided that one adds as a rider—and the rider, I am afraid, gives the whole hedonist game away—that you won't enjoy yourself much, if you make enjoyment your deliberate aim. That is one of the catches of life, the belief that you can take the kingdom of happiness by storm. You cannot, any more than you can take the kingdom of beauty by storm. Throw

yourself into your work, sacrifice yourself for a creed or to a cause, use yourself up in the service of others and looking back you will find that you have been happy; seek happiness directly and you will find that it eludes you. In fact, by far the best recipe for happiness that I know is not to give yourself leisure enough to wonder whether you are miserable or not.

‘But that, you see, is where faith comes in. For, being willing to sacrifice yourself for creed or cause, being prepared to serve others, means that you have faith that there are causes and people in the world who matter more than yourself; a faith that you are prepared to back in the face of every selfish instinct that insists that it is only yourself that matters. In fact, if you are going to lift yourself up out of the selfish little pit of vanity and desire that is the self, you must have something to believe in to lift yourself up by. Now for most people that something is an ideal, and no ideal is likely to cut much ice, unless one believes that the universe is good at bottom, that life has a purpose, that you have a part to play in the fulfilment of that purpose, and that its fulfilment involves increasing the amount of good in the world. That, of course, is where your Mr. Heardhux comes in. I daresay he is right when he insists that there is another world; I daresay, too, that it is a spiritual world, and I am even prepared to believe that it is in some sense the true home of man’s spirit, though how we ever got separated from it I can’t possibly imagine—but I am sure it is wrong to think that you can get back to it by turning a cold shoulder on this world, and then excusing yourself for not doing the best you can for your society by saying men are hopeless and can’t be improved, and that civilization is going to collapse and deserves to. “Works” as well as “faith”, in fact; “faith” as well as “works”. You prepare yourself for the next world by doing the best you can in this one. Ever read Plato’s *Republic*, by the way?’

‘Yes,’ said the Young Soldier, ‘a long time ago.’

‘Read it again. It is everlastingly topical; in fact, Books Eight and Nine which describe the breakdown of democracy and the rise of tyranny might have been written about Europe during the last twenty years. Plato makes great play with the analogy between the individual and the State. He wants to find out something about the nature of men and women so he starts by examining the nature of



the State which is, as he puts it, "the individual writ large". I seem to have started the other way round, and begun with the individual in order to say something about the community. And what I want to say is this, that, just as the best way for the individual is neither faith nor works but both, so that too is the best way for the State.'

'You are again talking in riddles,' said the Young Soldier.

'Sorry! What I mean is this. The Ultra-red Robot and the Red-tape Worm rely, for the making of the world after the war, upon changes imposed from without; changes in the political and changes in the economic system. The Robot looks to a revolution and the transfer of the ownership of the resources of the community to what he calls "the people," to introduce the millennium; the Red-tape Worm's method is, in effect, that of the business efficiency expert. He would run men's lives for them and, according to his lights, run them very well. Even Mr. Ema and Miss Ame believe that whatever is needful can be done by education, housing, entertainment, village colleges and so on; in other words, they pin their faith to a number of limited objectives, their idea being to introduce Socialism on the gradual instalment plan. All that kind of thing I call "Salvation by Works". One makes a better world by doing things to the political and economic system, transferring ownership to the people, scientifically managing the domestic housekeeping for the common good, providing good education, rational entertainment and so on.

'Mr. Heardhux will have none of it. Society, he tells us, will not be made better by politics and economics, because it can never be better than its members and its members can only become better if they "get religion". Change, then, must be from within; so the Heardhux recipe may stand for "Salvation by Faith".

'Now what I am trying to say is not *either* the one or the other, but *both* the one and the other, and that you mustn't expect too much even when both are tried.'

'Don't you be depressing, too,' said the Young Soldier. 'I can't stand much more gloom.'

'I will try not to be—in fact I don't want to be—but look at the facts. For three years already and for God knows how many more before the war is done, you have the great majority of the inhabitants of Europe busily engaged in hating, hurting and killing. All their time and money and energy are devoted to increasing their efficiency

in the art of slaughter. Their young men and young women are taught that their highest duty is to kill, at the orders of the State, their fellow men whom they have never seen, and in order that they may do this the more efficiently, they are herded together in droves like cattle and drilled into the closest semblance to machines that human beings can be made to assume. They are never alone with themselves; they have no chance to be themselves and whatever about them is distinctive and individual is ironed out in the interests of an ant-like uniformity. Their education has stopped dead at the very blossoming time of the mind and the spirit; they are taken from good books, from good talk, from music and poetry and pictures, from whatever refines the mind and fertilizes the spirit of man and in the enjoyment of which lies the chief distinction between man and the beasts. This is the fate of millions. Millions more are at work in factories performing hundreds of times a day the same routine operation, whose endless repetition dulls the mind and deadens the soul. These are the men and women who will make the world after the war. A generation younger still has had its education forcibly interrupted or truncated; it is taught half-time, it is taught with inadequate materials—in many evacuated schools there is a shortage, I am told, of books and pens—it is taught fifty or sixty to a class, it is taught by teachers who are harried by the hundred-and-one extraneous duties that the emergency has thrust upon them, or it is not taught at all but runs wild in the streets. This is the generation which will grow up into the world after the war.'

'You said you would not be depressing,' the Young Soldier complained, 'but really you seem to me every bit as bad as Captain Percy Nick, who tried to make out that the talk of the better world at the end of the war was all moonshine. I never heard such pessimism.'

'I am not a pessimist,' said the Philosopher.

'Yes you are, you are,' insisted the Young Soldier.

'Well, it all depends on what you mean by pessimism,' said the Philosopher. 'I've no use for the optimism that insists on seeing the light that is not there.'

'Even if it isn't there, that is no reason why you should put it out,' retorted the Young Soldier.

'I am not putting lights out,' said the Philosopher. 'On the contrary, I am very ready to believe that we shall do better this time than we did last. What Captain Nick said was that last time the statesmen made promises, that the promises went unfulfilled, and that the people were let down; therefore, he seemed to imply, they will be let down again. I should have thought that the fact that they *were* let down before meant, for what it is worth, that they *won't* be let down again. It will be more than any politician's place is worth to try to lead people up the garden again. No, all I was saying was that you mustn't expect too much.'

'Not much chance of my doing *that*,' said the Young Soldier ruefully.

'And you know there *is* another side to all this. There really is a new ferment at work in the minds of people, and not least in men and women in the Forces. For example, only this week there have been published the reports of the findings of three bodies concerned with different aspects of the community's life.<sup>1</sup> Each of them has, apparently, endorsed without a tremor, proposals so revolutionary that they would have taken away the breath of their own members before the war.'

'What are they?' asked the Young Soldier.

'There are the Trades Unions demanding family allowances, the abolition of public and private schools and free compulsory education up to the age of 16. There is the British Medical Association demanding what is, to all intents and purposes, a State-run medical service, though they don't call it that; and there is the Uthwatt Committee producing a Report which proposes to plan and control the development of land in the interests of the community and to make short shrift of private owners who might seek to obstruct this admirable proposal. Here are three potential revolutions for you in a week.'

'Well, then, it *will* be a better world, won't it?' said the Young Soldier. 'Couldn't you bring yourself to promise me that much, even if it is only a little better one?'

'My dear chap, I don't know. Unlike all the people who have

<sup>1</sup> The Philosopher must, we surmise, have been speaking before the publication of the Beveridge Report, since otherwise he could hardly have failed to have noted the revolutionary significance of its recommendations.

been talking to you, I really don't know. What is more, I don't see how anybody *can* know. That brings me, by the way, to the second mistake of the people you've been talking to—the mistake of dogmatism. How dogmatic they all were! With what certainty they all prophesied the future; yet all their prophecies were different. I should have thought that the fate of prophecy during the last few years might have taught men a little humility or, at least, put them on their guard. Take the war. Now the only thing that, looking back, you can say was probable about the course of the war was that none of the things that at the time seemed probable would happen. One is half tempted to say the same about the world after the war. Yet where the future is unknown, here is everybody supplying the place of knowledge by converting their conjectures into dogmas.'

'Oh, come off it,' said the Young Soldier, 'stop being so pontifical and Olympian and statesmanlike and dispassionate and non-committal and all the rest of it, and tell me what you think. Do you, for example, think that Mr. Heardhux is right in saying that only a new mutation will save us?'

'He may be. Read Arnold Toynbee's great work *Study of History*, and you are led to realize how rare and intermittent a thing civilization is. I suppose that the first civilization occurred not much more than three thousand years ago; since then there have been a number. But after a time they have all collapsed; never has there been anything like a continuous process of civilization.'

'Why did they collapse?'

'Almost always for the same reason. Sooner or later they committed suicide by their internecine wars. When the wars have gone on long enough, the civilization falls to pieces. No civilization, then, has persisted for more than a certain time, or gone beyond a certain point—which is, broadly speaking, the point that we have reached. It almost looks as if some law were at work which enabled human beings to raise their life to a certain level but prevented them from holding it at that level for more than a certain period. When that period has come to an end, human life falls back and the whole process begins over again. It was so in Assyria, Babylon and Egypt; in Greece, in Rome and in Renaissance Italy. And what, one might well ask, is there so particularly wise and virtuous about

us that we should be enabled to succeed where all our predecessors have failed?’

‘What do you mean by failed?’ asked the Young Soldier. ‘What *is* the collapse of a civilization?’

‘The end of law and the end, therefore, of security and justice; the degeneration of government into gangster rule with the result that men’s lives are dependent upon the caprice of the arbitrarily exercised power of an irresponsible few. The end of education and the end, therefore, of the arts and sciences. The Dark Ages which succeeded the break-up of the Roman Empire are a good example of what happens when the barriers of a civilization break down and the barbarians come flooding in. All those qualities which separate man from the beast, compassion, tolerance, kindness and humour, sensitiveness to beauty, the love of truth, and the pursuit of goodness, are diminished and all those which he shares in common with the brutes, lust and appetite, cruelty and greed and also the courage and physical strength and skill which are necessary to satisfy the lust and the appetite and the greed are enhanced and held in honour, in a word the qualities of the gangster and the tough and the virtues of the ant-heap.’

‘I suppose’, said the Young Soldier, reflectively, ‘that the Nazis are barbarous in that sense.’

‘I am afraid’, said the Philosopher, ‘that even when all allowance is made for propaganda, there can be no doubt about that. But even in the Nazis there is a sort of hope. One must remember that all civilized peoples began by being barbarians. Even, then, if the worst came to the worst and the Nazis were to win this war—not, by the way, that I think there is the least chance of their doing so—and imposed their rule upon Europe, this would not mean the end of civilization for all time, because they would not for all time remain the Nazis that we now know. In two or three generations, the spirit of man would once again be reborn; it would respond to beauty, would seek for truth, would honour art and value learning; it might even become gentle. But we need not pursue this line of thought, because, as I say, the Nazis are not going to win anyway.’

‘But what about Mr. Heardhux’s expected mutation?’ asked the Young Soldier.

‘Oh, I should not rely much on that if I were you. Of course it

may happen,' said the Philosopher, 'and I sometimes think', he added, with a twinkle in his eye, 'that Mr. Heardhux believes that it has happened already to him; but it hasn't, you know, and if we are to wait for that, we might, as you very properly remarked, have to wait until the cows come home. Meanwhile all this withdrawing in order to prepare and make straight the way of the coming mutation seems to me to be nothing more than an excuse for shirking. Things are so bad, one says, that they are past mending; therefore, there is no obligation laid on me to try and mend them. But they are not so bad, you know, and so there is an obligation—that was the point of my phrase "Salvation by Works". One has got to do the best one can and try to make a better job of the world after the war, even if one does not feel very hopeful about it.'

'But what about the law you were speaking of just now, which seems in time to bring every civilization to its end?'

'I don't believe in any such law. What I said was that it *almost* looks *as if* there is one, not that there is one. You see, I happen to believe in free will which means that I don't think that the future is determined. What the future will be depends upon us; we are free to make it as we please. Hence, once again, the obligation that is laid upon us to try to do the best we can.'

'But Ultra-red says there is going to be civil war and revolution, and that these things are rooted in the inescapable logic of history, according to which capitalism is bound to break down.'

'Yes, I know all that, and again the Robot may be right; but again I see no necessity about it. I can't see any necessary reason why capitalism should not go on, just as I can see no necessary reason why it should not be gradually transformed into something that is as near Socialism as makes no matter. What I object to is this idea that there are iron laws which are going to determine the future, irrespective of what any of us may think or want or plan, and to people's cocksureness about the effects of their application. Take one thing, for example, which may well upset Ultra-red's revolutionary apple cart.'

'What is that?'

'The birth-rate. There are now about forty-one million people in England and Wales. Let us suppose that the birth-rate and the

death-rate remain constant at their present level; they don't, we will suppose, go either up or down. It is then possible to calculate exactly how many people there will be in the country in a hundred years' time. How many do you think?'

'Well, I know the population is likely to go down, but of course I don't know how much or how quickly. I guess thirty million.'

'Four million.'

'Golly!' said the Young Soldier.

'What is more the population is going to change not only in numbers but in age composition, and the change is likely to begin pretty soon. For example, in 1970, that is to say in less than thirty years from now, only twenty-four people out of every hundred will be under thirty. Just before the last war, the number of those under thirty was fifty-nine per cent. Now who, I should like to know, make the wars?'

'The old men,' said the Young Soldier promptly.

'I doubt it. One of the failures of our civilization is its inability to find a use for the surplus energy of its young men. It was because Hitler found them an outlet that they first followed, and then worshipped him. However, let us say, if you like, that the old men make wars for the young men to fight in. You will, I suppose, agree that the young men do, at least, fight the wars?'

'Obviously,' said the Young Soldier.

'Right! Then as the young men grow fewer and fewer there will be an absence of raw material for the old men to make their wars with, unless, that is to say, the old men go and fight them themselves, which seems to me unlikely.'

'But supposing that the birth-rate goes up?'

'It may, of course. Mind you, I am not prophesying, but allow me to observe that all the factors that have made it go down—the employment of women resulting in late marriage, the education of children, which means that they are no longer a wage-earning asset to the family, the practice of birth control, distrust of the future, spiritual *malaise* and all the rest of it—are still operative, so that it is more likely to go down than up.'

'Are you talking about England only or about Europe?'

'What I am saying applies in its degree to all the peoples of Europe except the Russians. The Russians, the Chinese and the

Indians are multiplying. It is only Western civilization that is apparently dying. Mind you, I am not saying that this is necessarily a bad thing; there are good reasons for thinking that this country would be a happier place if it had fewer people in it, provided, of course, that they made up for their smaller numbers by enjoying life at a higher level. The only point that I am making is that the prospect of an England of four million comparatively elderly people makes most of our present talk about the future absurd. It is absurd, that is to say, to consider the problems of an England of four million people from the standpoint of our knowledge of an England of forty-one million.'

The Young Soldier was silent.

'Is there nothing that you can tell me before I go?' he asked a little wistfully. 'I understand that you are not prepared to prophesy but couldn't you put up a few signposts? For example, I would like to know what to do with myself.'

'That I think is easy. If you believe what I said about "Salvation by Works", you will throw yourself heart and soul into the task of making the better world, instead of merely looking for it.'

'Yes, but I must know first what kind of better world to try to make. That is why I asked for a signpost.'

'If I say that there are one or two signposts that seem to me fairly unmistakable, I hope you won't think that I am going back on my words and trying to prophesy.'

'Of course I won't; at least I don't mind if you do. What are they?'

'First, we have got to put an end to war, or our civilization itself will end. Mr. Heardhux was perfectly right to point out that war is a luxury we can no longer afford. Our powers of destruction have grown too great.'

'But how?' said the Young Soldier.

'Obviously, I think, by superseding the separate, sovereign, national State. We have always been told that we are members of one another. What we have always been told has to-day become literally true. As distance is abolished and the world grows smaller, it can no longer house a lot of separate, sovereign, national governments glaring suspiciously at one another across the barriers that they try artificially to maintain. I think of the modern world as a



great bed containing a number of sleepers. Presently the bed begins to shrink, and the sleepers are jostled ever more uncomfortably one on top of the other, until there is a rumpus and somebody gets kicked out on to the floor—in other words there is a war. The trouble, of course, is the sleepers' insistence upon staking out and maintaining against all comers their separate claims in the bed. I feel a certain delicacy in pursuing the metaphor further, but clearly the sleepers must consent to a degree of merging—in other words there must be some sort of Federation.

'And why, after all, should it be so difficult? Most of these national states which now impose themselves upon us as fixed and final forms of political organization, have grown up during the last three or four hundred years. As recently as the fifteenth century, people thought in terms not of France or England or Germany, but of Picardy, or Artois, or Provence, or Pomerania, or Saxony, or even of Lancashire and Yorkshire. To-day they think in terms of national personifications—La France, the Fatherland, Uncle Sam, Britannia. Well, they have got to go beyond these national units and national personifications, just as they went beyond the provinces and counties, if ever again there is to be peace in the world. So the first signpost to work for is some kind of Federal government.

'Secondly, if the Red-tape Worm's world is to be avoided, people have got to be educated—educated not only to make their living, but educated for leisure and educated for citizenship. Being educated for leisure means that one can tolerate oneself in one's time off without having to run round in circles, bleating like a lost sheep for somebody or something to amuse one. You see, immediately you become dependent upon others for your amusement, you become the prey of whatever organization sees a chance of making profit for itself out of catering for your tastes, by providing football pools, greyhound racing, dirt track racing, the cinema, the radio and so on. Citizens who become enfeebled by their lazy dependence upon the amusements which it pays commercial organizations to provide for them, are the raw material of the Red-tape Worm's State which dopes their senses in order to deaden their minds. Being educated for citizenship means that one becomes an alert and interested follower and critic of public affairs; that one has the power of private judgment and the will to exercise it; that one knows how

one's country is governed and to what ends it is governed. Uneducated citizens are like sheep flocking into the pen of the demagogue with the loudest voice or into the cage of the scientific expert whose hook has been concealed with the most seductive bait.

'One other safeguard against the Red-tape Worm's world—for of all the "better worlds" after the war of which you told me, this seems to me by far the most horrible—is a revival of man's spiritual life. For a generation people have grown up without religion, and though they may not know it, they are, I believe, seriously incommoded by the lack. Nature, I suspect, abhors a vacuum in the spiritual world, no less than in the physical, and men deprived of God, deprived that is to say of any channel along which to pour their feelings of reverence and their emotions of worship, dress up some all too human figure complete with a rain-coat and half a moustache, or a tummy and row of medals to take God's place. It has happened on the Continent, and it will happen here too, unless some means can be found of quickening and satisfying people's spiritual needs. Do you remember the parable in the Bible?'

'No,' said the Young Soldier, 'I don't read the Bible.'

'Well, it is a parable about a man who was possessed of a devil, and the devil was turned out, and the chamber was swept and cleaned but no steps were taken to occupy it, with the result that seven devils worse than the first, presently came to take the vacant place. Well, that is how it is with us. The Christianity of the Churches has petered out and its place is left empty, and all those awful religious substitutes whose acolytes danced round you have arisen to occupy it. If it doesn't revive soon, something much worse will supersede them. So another signpost I venture to put up points to a revival of man's spiritual life. But if you ask me how that is to be brought about, I have not the faintest idea.'

'Thank you for your signposts. I will do my best to follow them,' said the Young Soldier. 'But may I ask, do you follow them yourself?'

'My dear chap I am a philosopher. I am, if you like, the signpost. Now you don't expect to see a signpost marching along the road down which it points. Besides, I am too old. It is you who will have to make that better world, not I.'

The Philosopher turned to go.

‘Well,’ said the Young Soldier to himself, ‘he told me a good deal less than any of the others, but I daresay he is right. We simply don’t know. What little he did say, though, sounded more or less like sense.’

As he walked back to camp, the Young Soldier was pensive.





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